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The Order of War

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The Order of War

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Abstract

The present dissertation is an inquiry into how the relationship between war and the subject has been problematised through an ontology of operativity and command. It demonstrates how from the earliest political treatises of the Western tradition, notably in Plato and Aristotle, the notion that war [polemos] must be subjected to 'steering' has been present. Once conceived by the Pre-Socratics as inseparable from life [bios], permeating being as well as the cosmos, the dissertation shows how war [polemos] in classical Greece came to be discovered as a relationship of forces that must be mastered by the individual and governed at the level of the *polis*. The dissertation shows how, in fact, the *polis* was founded on the idea of steering war as a means of rendering being governable forming the terrain for the entry into life [bios] of the ontology of operativity and command. The dissertation demonstrates how the ontology of operativity and command finds its early expression in the Greek *stratia* [army] as an articulation of the ruling principle [arkhē] that ties together a tactics of individuating bodies via discipline and a strategy that integrates the tactical individuation of bodies to form an assemblage of forces that can be steered by command. The dissertation shows how, in the *stratia*, the ruling principle articulated a homological relationship between the government of self and others enabling the army to be shaped from the otherwise disordered multitude. A primordial strategic incitement for rendering being governable, in the army the individual stratiōtēs [a citizen bound to military service], in his government of self, simultaneously came to bind himself to the command of the stratēgos [general].

Tracing an itinerary from archaic Greece to the end of the period of the later Roman Empire, the dissertation analyses the formation of the field of knowledge in which the ontology of operativity and command is displaced from the classical sense of being to be tied to the existence of God. The dissertation explains how this displacement takes place with the translation of the Greek

notion of polemos [war] into the Latin bellum, the ruling principle [arkhē] into the word of God [logos], which, ultimately, will be identified with the will (of God). The instrumental logic of polemos inaugurated by the classical Greeks as private war and the will of self (vaguely familiar to the Greeks, but nonetheless present in Aristotle) is then reworked into a theology of war, as the ontology of operativity and command is identified with the will of God. Located within the field of critical analysis, the dissertation draws on, in particular, the work of Michel Foucault. Taking its cue from Foucault's analysis of war, the military organisation and biopolitics, the dissertation shows how the biopolitical idea of managing life and survival can be traced to the ontology of command and operativity that once found its lowly beginning with the Greek idea of steering war [polemos]. The idea of steering war, the dissertation argues, is a truly fundamental structure of Western politics occupying the threshold on which the relation between the political and man is realised.

Contents

Introduction	6
Situating the thesis	25
Method	31
§ 1 <i>Inverting the Concept of War</i>	
1.1 The Circularity (of Steering) War and Biopolitics	58
§ 2 <i>Philopolemos</i> – The Friendship of War	
2.1 <i>Hērōs</i>	72
2.2 <i>Tragodia</i>	86
§ 3 <i>Historia</i> – The Calligraphy of War and Time	
3.1 <i>Stratēgos, Stratiōtēs, Stratia</i>	106
3.2 <i>Paideia, Askēsis</i>	117
3.3 <i>Alētheia</i>	123
§ 4 <i>Politikon Zōon</i> – Threshold of Classical Politics	
4.1 <i>Polemon epithumētēs</i>	128
4.2 <i>Arkhē, Theos, Theōria</i>	143
4.3 <i>Thesis of Biopolitics</i>	168
§ 5 <i>Eleutheria</i> – Freedom and the Sheepfold	
5.1 <i>To en zēn</i>	179
5.2 <i>Dikē, Sōphrōn, Sōphrosynē</i>	188
5.3 <i>Technē politikē</i>	209
5.4 <i>Statos</i>	223

§ 6	Threshold of Modernity – The <i>Logos</i> of <i>Polemos</i> [War]	
6.1	<i>The Kinship of War</i>	233
6.2	<i>In Conclusion</i>	236
	Bibliography	240
	Index of Names	250

Introduction

One would have a difficult time finding among the Greeks anything resembling the modern notion of 'war'. Although the word *polemos* is commonly translated as 'war', *polemos* had a distinctly different meaning far removed from what we today have learned to think of as a certain practice confined to the logical space occupied by the military apparatus or its counterpart, the terrorist organisation. To speak of *polemos* strictly in terms of the *militia* [military] or the *stratia* [army] would have made no sense. Nor would it have been meaningful to the Greeks to speak of *polemos* simply in terms of the singular activity of delivering the soul of the enemy to the underworld of Hades. The Greeks certainly had a vocabulary available for describing such activities, for example, *makhē* [combat] or *nikaō* [conquest], but the category that covered these activities is much more difficult to grasp.

Contrary to the modern notion of war, *polemos* did not function as a category that determined a conceptual boundary enabling the disclosure of the true nature of war or the practices that since came to animate it, gave it presence and allowed it to function in our reality. While Plato, for example, could certainly speak of *polemos* when describing the practice of combat, he did not specifically have in mind a certain privileged activity bestowed upon the *stratia* to carry out by the command of the *stratēgos* [general]. In fact, *polemos* could not be explained as the effect of a command or a particular will, as we are accustomed to in our thought with the aphorism of war being the continuation of politics by other means. Continuing this line of thought, the idea of a threshold of politics at which point war supposedly ends seems to appear distinctly modern in view of the classical Greek discourse on *polemos*. Indeed, *polemos* does not seem to have functioned as a term that demarcated a temporally or spatially delimited state, which could then be excluded from

political life [*bios politikos*] and confined to the outside of the *polis*. In fact, to think of *polemos* in terms of an exteriority to the site where man appears as a living being would already be a mistake. On the contrary, *polemos* is the very site on which man appears.

In the early representations of *polemos* in the oratory tradition of Homer, we find no separation between man and war. In fact, the Homeric vocabulary does not seem to know the idea that war could have an identity different from what simply occurs at the level of being. In Homer, *polemos* is the very theatre of being and the site at which the hero turns up, half man, half god, to perform his deeds and acts. In just as striking a fashion, when the poet recounts the epic tale of heroes, gods, and mere mortals, we find no real distinction between being and action. In Homer, action is not, as it would become with Aristotle, what occurs as an effect of being having potentiality, which, by the effectuation of a sense of will, would pass over into actuality. The division of being introduced by Aristotle into *dynamis* [potential] and *energeia* [act] remains unknown. Accordingly, when the hero performs his deeds and acts, Homer does not invoke the idea of an operativity of being that, as an articulation of will, brings mind [nous, intellect] to bear on the world of things to let potentiality pass over into actuality in what we would call action. On the contrary, when the hero seems to act, it is because *Arēs*, the terrible war-god, has inspired in his soul the divine exaltation of rage and affect, or because the mighty Sky-god, Zeus, has filled his limbs with the force of that of a wave thrusting against the seashore, and if not then because another and perhaps lesser god or maybe an entire host of gods have intervened in the world of mortals, with their multiple appetites and pleasures and pains, their cunning schemes and innocent deceits, and, in the ceaseless polemology of being, once again set things in motion in the bringing together of opposite forces; the reality known as *polemos*.

The idea of a self one could identify as responsible for bringing potential into act in other words seems absent in Homer. Moreover, Homer had no need for the notion of a self precisely because being and action were but the workings of *polemos*. This is also to say that the Homeric hero cannot get away from war. In fact, even the gods, who at first glance would seem to command the battle from a distance, find themselves in perpetual struggle, conflict, and tension.

There is no outside of *polemos*, then, no exteriority, and no point of articulation from which, at the site of an absolute distance to being, actuality could be traced back to disclose a supreme origin of things. *Polemos* is both the relations of opposites of which the world of men and gods is made and the verve that, in pulling apart and drawing together these opposites, engenders being as a state of perpetual motion. Things remain in perpetual motion, then, which is why there can be no notion of the self or the identity of things.

While this system of thought remains implicit in Homeric poetry, the Pre-Socratics would make it explicit, in particular, in the Pythagorean and Heraclitean notions of movement [kinēsis]. Even in Aristotle, *kinēsis* would remain a fundamental principle. Only here *kinēsis* is what allows for being to be 'mobilised' and put in movement in the passage from potential to act. No such distinction appears in Homer, and it would have made little sense for Homer to speak of things in terms of substance [ousia] (Aristotle) or form [eidos] (Plato), potential and act. On the contrary, things come into being and become intelligible by simple opposition; day and night, male and female, famine and plenty come to presence by virtue of forming relationships of contraries tied together as a chain of resemblances. All things are but what appear in the coming to presence of relationships of opposites, which is to say that the essence of matter is *polemos*, and everything was, is, and always will be given by *polemos* as energy in flux, the pure relativity of force.

In Socratic thought, *polemos* still remains tied to being. However, during the classical period a reworking of the discourse on being will appear in which, perhaps for the first time in history, it will be possible to think of *polemos* in terms of kind, one which can be rendered intelligible by knowing the form [eidos] of it. Each kind of war, which nonetheless still lacks a true identity, will then correspond to a different mode of being and inform of a different relationship between man and the world. In the *Laws*, then, we find Plato discussing *polemos* in terms of *eidos*. There are three kinds of war, Plato explains well-knowing that no such philosophy of the order of things had yet been attempted. First, there is the kind of war that goes on among city-states. Second, Plato says in a passage that may have influenced Hobbes and the natural rights thinkers, there is a war that goes on in the public sphere, in which

“... everyone [is] an enemy of everyone else” (Laws 626e). But there is also a third kind of war that belongs to the sense and mode of being for which the word *polemos* came to be used during the classical period. It is a war fought neither with weapons or fists nor with wilful expressions or emphatic gesticulations: Hence “each man fights a private war against himself”, says Cleinias the Cretan to the Athenian Stranger and adds “This, sir, is where a man wins the first and best of victories – over himself” (Ibid.). While the passage may be read as a mere allegorical exchange between partners in polemic, Plato, elaborating the theme of this struggle of the self, page after page, in fact seems to have considered this kind of war, in which man is called upon to do battle against certain belligerent forces within, to be the most important of the three. This follows from the fact that what was at stake in this war that lacks all the usual blood and mud of battle, and which was given form by the power of imagination, was not a simple rhetorical gesture, but the practice on which the *telos* of the classical *polis* rested.

However, when we first encounter this discourse, it is clearly controversial. Not only did this distinctly new mode of thinking present its audience with certain ontological difficulties,¹ even its principal protagonist immediately recognises the paradoxical nature of it. *Eidos* must be understood as something that exists only in itself, Plato explains in the *Symposium*. In fact, says Plato (211b), *eidos* is not anywhere present in a thing, as in an animal, or in earth, or in heaven, or in anything else, but merely reside in the arbitrary relation between language and the world. Plato, in other words, is perfectly well aware that the positing of *polemos* in terms of form represents an abstraction, since the actuality of *polemos* is but different manifestations of the same order of reality in which man finds himself in a relationship of struggle, conflict, and tension. However, as it often happens in the strategic displacements, rearticulations, and intertextual overlays of discourse that make up the fabric history, the ‘constructivism’ admitted by Plato in his philosophy of form seems to have been

¹ An example of the difficulties encountered with Plato’s philosophy of form could be drawn from Plato’s exchanges with his Cynic partner in polemic, Diogenes of Sinope. Legend has it that when Plato defined a human being as a featherless biped, and was praised for it, Diogenes plucked a chicken, brought it to Plato’s Academy, and declared, “Behold - Plato’s human being.” Plato then added “with broad, flat, nails” to his definition.

lost to historical contingency even to the point where it has become wholly obscured. Most importantly, in the complex course of descent through Western history, the discourse on the self has been divorced from the original setting in which it appeared in the practice of private war in the formation of a political anatomy of being that, in dividing *polemos* from being in the realm of ideas, once made it possible to render being governable.

In *The Use of Pleasure*, Michel Foucault referred to this practice of private war that emerges in classical Greece in terms of the government of self. Writing in the second volume of *The History of Sexuality*, the intellectual itinerary that seems to have guided Foucault was the problematisation of the subject. Contrasting the political techniques of subjection that governs the modern subject with the practices of the government of self and the art of living [technē tou biou] found in Greco-Roman antiquity, Foucault discovers how the subject is possible not simply in the sense of subjection, but in the deliberative sense of subjectivation. A set of practices that defined the domain of an ethics of existence, Foucault explains, the requirement involved in the classical Greek government of self “... was not presented in the form of a universal law, which each and every individual would have to obey, but rather as a principle of stylization of conduct for those who wished to give their existence the most graceful and accomplished form possible.” (Foucault 1992: 250-251). The government of self by each individual rather than the universal law to govern all subjects in the same way, Foucault contends while implicitly scorning the simultaneously universalising and totalising aspirations of modern power, the cipher that informs the classical idea of being is the ethical subject capable of governing himself.

Most interestingly, Foucault does not seem to have been concerned with how it is the ethical subject of the classical Greek era appears to have come into being by means of war. This is surprising in view of how Foucault devoted significant time and effort to the study of war in relation to subjectivity and power relations. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault first explained how the modern subject and early modern society came to be shaped from disciplinary techniques issuing from the military organisation for war. A set of strategies and tactics borrowed from the military sciences and the institution of the army,

disciplinary power emerged as a whole series of practices for putting life into work through the simultaneous pacification and mobilisation of being. A disciplinary power over life, Foucault says, moulded the modern subject from the fabric of the 'docile' body of the soldier, which, as a general model of discipline was dispersed throughout society and came to function in the most diverse spheres, in particular, in the educational space, the hospital, the prison, and eventually the factory (Foucault 1991: 165).

Moving from the analysis of disciplinary power in *Discipline and Punish* to the analysis of biopolitical power in *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault shifts focus to pursue the modern problem of war explaining how war came to function as a strategy of the state for the 'management of life and survival' in the mobilisation of entire populations for war (Foucault 1998: 137). Finally, in his 1976 lecture series at Collège de France, *Society Must be Defended*, Foucault shifted focus to analyse how the practice of private war was reinvented in seventeenth-century England and came to function as a 'disruptive principle' employed first by the Parliamentarians in their opposition to the Royalists, and later, when it appeared in France at the end of the reign of Louis XIV, by the aristocracy. With the most perfect lucidity, Foucault shows how, in the early modern discourse on private war, society was considered as completely permeated by warlike relationships; that war was regarded as a social relationship and the primal and basic state of affairs, that war was seen as the principle of power relations, and that civil order must in fact be considered an order of battle, one which goes on at all times beneath the state apparatus (Foucault 2004). While the major traditions of political theory might lead us to mistaken this sense of private war for the primitive state of the 'war of every man against every man' in Hobbes, Foucault explains how this private war cannot be understood in terms of the idea of the state of nature. On the contrary, in Hobbes, the state of nature exists as a fictional principle that allows for the justification of the theory of the State (the principle of sovereignty, the monopoly on war, the teleology of peace). The discourse of Hobbes, then, is the point-for-point exact opposite of the discourse on private war that claims war cannot belong to the State; that war, rather than an instrument of State, is the irreducible and permanent relationship of forces in which society and social relations consist (Ibid. 87-111). This argument, in

turn, has Foucault explaining how the virtuality of war, in the sense of the Hobbessian state of nature, is the cipher of the form of peace that modern societies realise.

In any case, the interiority of the classical Greek private war certainly seems most different from the exteriority of the private war waged against a real opponent in seventeenth-century England and France. It also appears to be unrelated to the state warfare of modern biopolitical power that mobilises entire populations to wage war to the point where the species itself becomes what is at stake. However, while these manifestations of war are certainly distinctly modern phenomena, the point where they find their common locus or point of articulation is precisely in the political anatomy inaugurated with the classical Greek ontology on being and war, operativity and command. This is not by any means to say that they are ontologically similar and made from the same social fabric. Nor is it to say that they – even remotely – function in a similar way at the interstices of a timeless history. It is to say that in problematising the relationship between man and war, the Greeks opened up the terrain for the formation of a field of knowledge in which it became possible to recognise war as a means of rendering being governable. Accordingly, one could contrast the interiority of the classical Greek private war of the self with the exteriority of the disciplinary techniques that appeared at the threshold of modernity assuming control over bodies to increase their utility. However, the ethical subject who came into being in classical Greece with the government of self has more in common with the eighteenth century soldier who became the model modern subject than what might be assumed. Obviously, the end of disciplinary power and its functioning through apparatuses in modern society have nothing to do with the end of political community in classical Greece. In fact, one needs to look no further than to the intrinsically modern idea, discovered by disciplinary power and developed by biopolitical regimes, of ‘labouring mankind’ to realise that they are completely different models and modes of subjection; the functional reduction of the body and its refiguration, its re-organisation in relation to time and space, the extraction of its forces and their re-insertion into an economy of forces – all these modes of subjection emerged in modernity with a strategic impetus that no doubt would have been

completely alien to the Greeks to whom *oikonomia* [economy] concerned a matter of the private household.

However, the model of discipline emergent from the military organisation is clearly much older than modern disciplinary power. In fact, by the time modern disciplinary power appears, the military-disciplinary model had been in circulation for at least two thousand years dating back to Greco-Roman Antiquity. While the Roman *legio* [legion] perfected the military model of discipline, the military model seems to have come into being with the birth of the Greek *stratia* and the *militia*. What the present study has had to record among its findings, then, is that the analyses cannot be separated. Schematising a great deal we could say that when Foucault speaks of the modern subject in terms the 'docile' body and discipline as an 'art of rank', which operates by means of 'the mastery of each individual over his body' (Foucault 1991: 137; 146), or that war is the cipher of the form of peace that modern societies realise (Foucault 2004: 110-111), or that, in turn, the problem of war is radically exacerbated inter-socially as modern power assumes the role of managing life and survival (Foucault 1998: 137), one should also hear the *telos* of an ethics required in the government of self formed on the terrain of classical Greece. This relationship, which for now must be held in the suspension of a hypothesis, becomes more readily apparent when one considers the fact that the practice of the government of self appeared not so much in the image of the first dawn of ethical discourse, but rather on the battlefield as a fundamental strategic incitement for the government of men.

The government of self, in other words, seems to have emerged from what we for heuristic purposes alone could call the military dimension of the classical *polis*. In its military form, the government of self appeared in the conjunction of a tactics of individuating bodies via discipline and a strategic model that integrate the tactical individuation of bodies to form an assemblage of forces that can be steered by command. The principle that allowed for the tactical schema and the strategic model of command, out of which the *stratia* [army] was shaped from the otherwise disordered multitude, emerged with what Aristotle came to discover as the ruling principle [*arkhē*]; that is, the ruling principle according to which the individual *stratiōtēs* [a citizen bound to

military service], in his government of self, simultaneously came to bind himself to the command of the *stratēgos* [general].

In its political form, as we find it in the first political treatises, it appears in the requirement of the individual to construct a relationship of command with the self as a condition of possibility of being political. The most famous example appears in the alluring definition of man in the *Politics* where Aristotle, in a passage that was to become canonical to Western political thought, defined man as a *politikon zōon*. While this definition is often rendered in terms of Aristotle positing man as an animal with the capacity for political existence, the definition in fact only attains its meaning when taken together with the distinction drawn by Aristotle between the *politikon zōon* and the seemingly peculiar figure who, by reference to Homer, is described as one ‘whose desire is ruled by war’ [polemou epithumētēs] (*Politics* 1253a: 1-6). In opposing political man to the mode of being of the one whose desire is ruled by war, Aristotle defined the sense of being political, not so much, as has been assumed, in terms of an ontology of man and animal or a distinction between forms of life, but rather by recourse to a certain character in Homer who, as will become apparent, seems to show a stubborn inability to follow command and govern the self.

If we turn now to Plato’s discourse on private war in the *Laws*, we basically find the same requirement of the individual to construct a relationship of command with the self. In this sense, Plato was perhaps the first to discover the site of struggle where the citizen soldier and the general, the individuated body and the self, once found their common place of residence. It is the site of conquest and victory where the command of the self echoes the command of the general as man ‘wins the battle over himself’, but it is also the site of defeat and profound loss, as man loses his sense of self to obedience and command (as a rule, the will of someone else). In fact, as the present dissertation will put forward for reflection, what is at stake in Plato’s private war of the self, hinging on the division of *polemos*, is the quintessential politico-strategic incitement for rendering being governable, an incitement which would exercise an influence so profound in the history of Western political thought that one might refer to it as a primordial ontology of the political.

While Foucault's untimely death prevents us from knowing how he would have developed the inquiry into the subject, it is nevertheless puzzling how Foucault, in his analysis of the government of self in classical Greece, makes no mention of the analysis in *Discipline and Punish* of the formation of the modern subject by disciplinary power in the transposition of the military organisation to society. *Discipline and Punish* in fact is a paradigmatic text on how the military model is deployed by disciplinary power in a war fought for political order, not among states, but at the more fundamental level of the human body. In an argument that seems to read as an inversion of Plato's discourse on private war and the conquest of self, Foucault shows how the most important battle is not the one fought on the territorial battlefield where the forces of states clash, but rather the one fought on the battleground of the human body. What is important, Foucault argues, is the order being assumed within the human body, since what is at stake, in these minutiae workings of power, is the form of order modern societies realise.

In any case, what explains the absence in *The Use of Pleasure* of the military-disciplinary perspective is perhaps the simple fact that Foucault, after the publication of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, seems to have reorientated his work from a political reading of war and the power apparatuses of Western modernity to an ethical reading of subjectivation in Greco-Roman Antiquity. In other words, war was not the chosen thematic to be pursued by Foucault in the second volume of *The History of Sexuality*. Nonetheless, in these pages Foucault shows an acute sensitivity to how the government of self of the ethical subject emerged within an agonistic field of forces. While never mentioning the term *polemos*, Foucault explains how the classical vocabulary used to describe the realisation of the cardinal virtues of the ethical subject, the virtues of moderation [*sōphrosynē*] and self-control [*enkrateia*], was expressed by a whole series of representations seemingly borrowed from war. The discourse on moderation and self-control, says Foucault, whether in Xenophon, Diogenes, Antiphon, Plato or Aristotle, was in fact written entirely in the codes of war, combat, and conquest:

Ethical conduct in matters of pleasure was contingent on a battle for power. This perception of the *hēdonai* [pleasure] and *epithumia* [desire] as a formidable enemy force, and the correlative constitution of oneself as a vigilant adversary who confronts them, struggles against them, and tries to subdue them, is revealed in a whole series of expressions traditionally employed to characterise moderation and immoderation: setting oneself against the pleasures and desires, not giving in to them, resisting their assaults, or on the contrary, letting oneself be overcome by them, defeating them or being defeated by them, being armed or equipped against them. It is also revealed in metaphors such as that of the battle that has to be fought against armed adversaries..." (Foucault 1992: 66-67).

As Foucault explains, one could behave ethically only by adopting a 'polemical' attitude towards oneself; the individual could achieve the virtues of moderation and self-control only through *makhē* [combat] and *nikaō* [conquest]. Most importantly, we see how this struggle seems to imply the formation of a tactical divide within the self. To form oneself as a virtuous and moderate subject, Foucault says, "... the individual has to construct a relationship with the self that is of the 'domination-submission', 'command-obedience', 'mastery-docility' type (Ibid. 70). The virtuous individual must interiorize a tactical division of the self enabling a relationship of domination, a relationship of mastery by which the individual, pace Foucault, could 'rule the desires and the pleasures', 'exercise power over them', 'govern them' [kratein, archein]. Now, the principle that enables this simultaneous division and articulation of being, that is, the principle that enables the individual to become virtuous, Foucault mentions en passant, was the ruling principle [arkhē] (Ibid.).

The analysis of the body as the strategic battleground of power is certainly present in Foucault's analysis of the Greeks then. However, it is rather with the analytical aim of disclosing the possibility of subjectivation apparent in the 'mode of subjection' according to which the conduct of man was to be regulated. The mode of subjection, Foucault explains, was defined by a *savoir-faire*, a practice or art that prescribed the modalities of the action to be taken according to circumstance and which, most importantly, the individual could equally well choose not to follow. In this sense, as Foucault argues, "... the mode of being to which this self-mastery gave access was characterized as an active freedom, a

freedom that was indisociable from a structural, instrumental, and ontological relation to truth.” (Ibid. 92). But while the mode of subjection involved in the practice of self-mastery certainly appeared as an active freedom, detached from the constraints of the universal law, Foucault does not seem to pay attention to how it was modelled after the principle of *arkhē* and the form of political authority. Indeed, in this mode of subjection, the idea of freedom and the idea of rendering being governable are part of the same dream. And while this mode of subjection allowed for the spiritual combat of the aesthetic self in the realisation of freedom, it was never specifically tied to the individual. On the contrary, the government of self and the government of others were seen as having the same form, the form given by the ruling principle, the *arkhē*. This is how the relationship of command and obedience, ruling and subject element appears both at the site of interiority and exteriority, in fact simultaneously, permeating the most diverse of spheres of classical Greek society. Foucault’s text, although intended to demonstrate the ethical qualities of life in the *polis*, is instructive:

Self-mastery and mastery of others were regarded as having the same form; since one was expected to govern oneself in the same manner as one governed one’s household and played one’s role in the city, it followed that the development of personal virtues, of *enkrateia* in particular, was not essentially different from the development that enabled one to rise above citizens to a position of leadership. The same apprenticeship ought to make a man both capable of virtue and capable of exercising power. Governing oneself, managing one’s estate, and participating in the administration of the city were three practices of the same type. (Ibid. 75-76).

As Foucault shows, a perfect ethical homology existed between the government of self and the government of others, a homology that we moderns certainly cannot but admire not least for its reference to being as a matter of true action rather than true knowledge. Surprisingly though, Foucault never dwells on the exemplary place in which this homological relationship of command and obedience found its expression in the classical period. However, in perfect consistency and continuity with the requirement found in the government of self, the command-obedience principle of *arkhē* is articulated

most clearly in the practices of the *stratia*, in particular, in the relationship between the ruling element of the general [stratēgos] and the subject element of the citizen soldier [stratiōtēs]. In the practices of the army, the government of self does not refer to being in the sense of an active freedom, but rather to the imperative form of command as a having-to-be or –do. As Plato says in a passage of the *Laws*, where he explains a whole set of rules governing the relationship between the citizen soldier and the general, in matters of war no one should be left to their own device. That is, one must give full attention to observing the ruling principle according to which no one should ‘follow his own work’ (942a-c). In Xenophon’s account in the *Spartan Constitution*, we find a similar concern about following command, which is how, Xenophon explains of the Spartan military *paideia* [education], “... at Sparta the boys were never without a ruler” (2.11).

It is in this sense of the military-strategic principle that simultaneously pacifies and mobilises being to a certain end we must now resituate the meaning of virtue on the terrain of operativity. As Plato explains in a discussion of the cardinal virtues of warfare, in combat it is vital that the individual shows obedience, moderation, and self-restraint (Ibid.). This is echoed in Xenophon in a passage of *Memorabilia* in which he also stresses the importance of being of sound mind [sōphroneō] and showing disciplined and orderly behaviour [eutakteō] (3.5.21,15). However, contrary to the practice of self-mastery as an active freedom in the use of pleasure, discipline, moderation, self-restraint, and obedience are not so much signs that read as aesthetic beauty or gracefulness, as they are operative principles of being that enable the functioning of the army. By having self-restraint and being of sound mind, the soldier does not pursue the enemy recklessly like the individual who cannot control the affects. By being obedient, the soldier does not abandon his general or fellow soldier and run away from the battle. By having discipline, the actions of the soldier are not driven by desire and excess, but guided by inward reflectiveness, wherefore, even in the face of danger, he does not break ranks, but stays in formation thus safeguarding the army as an assemblage of forces. In the *stratia* and the *militia*, virtue is what renders being operable to give foundation to command, which is how virtue becomes duty, and duty virtue. In the military model of command

and operativity, duty and virtue, ethics and warfare enter into a zone of indistinction.

A certain relationship, then, seems to exist between the disciplinary power of modernity and classical Greece as tied together by the military model of command and operativity. Hence, if we are to further pursue the Foucaultian project of problematising the relationship between the subject and war, we must go beyond the classical Greeks. Indeed, the truly profound implications of the military model can only be grasped if we return to the Homeric world from which we set out at the beginning of this study. In Homer, we saw how the logic of the command-obedience relationship found in the *arkhē* remains absent in the workings of the deeds and acts of the hero. When Achilles, the best and bravest of heroes, performs his deeds and acts it is not because the general or, more exactly, the king of the Achaeans, Agamemnon, has commanded it. It is because the gods have inspired his soul or filled his limbs with the force of their appetites and pleasures and pains. This entails a most different relationship between being and war the importance of which becomes apparent when, in the *Iliad*, Agamemnon attempts to do what would be seen as wholly natural and the duty of any virtuous *arkhōn* [leader] or *stratēgos* of the classical era, which is to rule over Achilles commanding him into battle. What happens next is not the execution of command. On the contrary, Achilles enters into a certain state of profound rage [*menis*], the kind of rage that appears because Agamemnon has usurped a power that belongs to no mere mortal. This is how, in complete opposition to the classical virtues of obedience, moderation, and self-restraint that governs the citizen soldier, the attempt at commanding Achilles is seen as an act against nature to which the gods can only respond by inspiring in the soul of Achilles the exaltation of rage. In fact, so begins the primordial work on war of the Western tradition not with the display of self-restraint, moderation or obedience, but with rage, as the poet calls on the goddess to let the divinity of it be known:

Of the rage of Achilles, son of Peleus, sing Goddess that murderous rage which condemned Achaeans to countless agonies and threw many warrior souls into Hades, and made themselves spoil for dogs and every bird... (*Iliad* I: 1-3),

As we learn from the first line of the *Iliad*, rage, while certainly announcing the coming of dreadful and atrocious events, has a more important and special significance. In fact, it attains a distinctly positive meaning in Homer and occurs in close correlation with the virtue of *arētē* [excellence, honour]. As Sloterdijk (2010) argues in an attempt at relating the archaic experience to the more familiar vocabulary of the classical era, rage, although it will be situated at the exact opposite position in the classical hierarchy of human affects, could be considered as being close to 'the good'. Contrary to the economy of virtue and war of the classical military organisation, then, the Homeric economy of war and virtue is an economy of the passions, of rage and affect. Virtue is situated within a thinking of war that has at its disposal a vocabulary, which not only establishes a positive relation between the affects and war, but conceives of this relationship as divine and the expression of life most profound and most worthy of praise. So much so that the Greeks had a term to express the kinship of man and war that runs through the channels of affect. The term *philopolemos*, which occurs most frequently in Homer, literally means 'lover or friend of war'. To be *philopolemos* expresses the highest praise in Homer placing the strife of the singular *polemistēs* [warrior] among the deeds and acts of gods.

To be *philopolemos* might seem to imply a certain pertinacious conviction of the singular hero to follow no one, but the will of gods to whom he is bound by divine order. It is no doubt in this image of the unique, autarkical, passionate, but also narcissistic 'man of war' that the ancient cult of heroes is often portrayed in the literature. The self-conceived grandeur and the slightly delusional account of divine kinship, in turn, is what accounts for the seemingly obstinate behaviour in Achilles. But this would not be true to the world of archaic Greece. It is because of the brilliant reading of Homeric poetry by classical philologist Bruno Snell that the present inquiry has not had to remain content with an analysis based upon preconceived notions conferred onto the archaic system of thought by another most different from it. In his analysis of the Homeric characters, Snell shows how the apparent obstinacy of the hero to make conscientious attempts to control the affects and passions has little to do with eccentricity, obstinacy or will of self. Rather, it has to do with the fact that the idea of the mind [*nous*] and the will [*boulēsis*] are completely absent in

Homer's account of man. In *The Discovery of the Mind*, Snell explains how the mind in fact was the invention of the classical Greeks, in particular, classical philosophy. The absence of the mind as an explanatory principle of action is precisely what explains the invocation by Homer of the Olympian gods. Homer, in other words, could not do without the invention of the deities if he were to make sense of his characters doing something rather than nothing.

In terms of the present study, Snell's account of an archaic world without the soundness of mind to guide being and action seems to affirm the suspicion that, perhaps, what was at stake in the practice of the government of self was not so much an ethics or an art of living (although they were certainly integral to it), but rather the elaboration of a certain idea of the self or, more precisely, the notion of the soul seen as the division and simultaneous articulation of the relationship of command and obedience found in the *arkhē*. If this is true, then it will be necessary to reconsider not only the sense of the Aristotelian definition of man as a political reference to life, but also, in turn, what we have learned think of as war. Indeed, the logic once found in the principle of *arkhē* may be so deeply interlaced with the idea of the self and the notion of war that we cannot think of either the subject or war without re-invoking the ontology of operativity and command² that once emerged with the military government of self and others. This suspicion seems supported by a passage in Heidegger where he quotes a certain fragment 53 by the Pre-Socratic thinker, Heraclitus. At first glance, the fragment appears to be a kind of oracular exegesis of war belonging to an ancient form of poetry whose sheer exoticism makes it difficult to fathom. However, what reads as paradox and parable is in fact the language of another system of thought, which, as one reads the fragment, seems to shatter all the familiar landmarks of one's thought, of *our* thought, threatening to destroy the age-old distinction between the Same and the Other by which we have become accustomed to grasping what we call war and what we refer to as

² I borrow the term 'ontology of operativity and command' from Agamben (2013) to employ it here in a different way to designate the relationship of command and obedience articulated in the ruling principle of *arkhē*.

the subject.³ Here is the text of the fragment in the translation of W.K.C. Guthrie (2003: 446):

Polemos pantōn men patēr esti, pantōn de basileus, kai tous men theous edeixe tous de anthrōpous, tous men doulous epoiēse tous de eleutherois.

War is father of all and king of all, and some he reveals as gods, others as men, some he makes slaves, others free.

‘War is father of all’, we learn in the first line, which is to say that, obviously, the fragment does not locate war on an axis of politics or at the point of emergence of a state of violence. In fact, it appears there is no origin of war. It is rather the reverse; war is the origin. Accordingly, war is not situated at the site where it would appear as the effect of a series of events, which is to say in a relation of posteriority to the state, the city, or man from which point of origin it could be brought into being in what we call ‘making war’. Rather, the fragment seems to invert the site of order in fact reversing the relationship between man and war situating war before man in the order of things. However strange or alien this may seem to the modern mind, the order in which the things listed in the fragment appear is not the only oddity. What seems disturbing to our thought is certainly also the narrowness of the distance that separates the things listed. In fact, there really are no fixed limits that mark the clear separation of things. War is juxtaposed with things that belong to apparently different categories and classifications as men appear in intimate propinquity with the gods, the slaves, and the free. In fact, even if each category can be assigned a clear meaning and a demonstrable content, the disturbing nearness of gods and men, the slaves and the free, seems so strangely unfamiliar to us as to appear wholly obscure. The fragment in other words imbues war with an unimaginable order of things. It destroys syntax and renders the relationship between language and logic unstable. In fact, it seems to be the confusions of language in which noun and verb are applied indifferently to subjects and objects, intermixing the qualities of the Same with properties of the Other. War is the site where the fictions and

³ The form of this argument is an allusion to Foucault (2008: XVI-XXIV).

fables loom in the dimension of an Orphic language of strange resemblances that never cease to proliferate.

However, in view of the ontology of operativity and command delineated in these pages, it appears that what we perceive as the strange intermingling of things in a foreign dimension is in fact a reflection of the limits of our own system of thought, the very impossibility of thinking the relationship between man and war in *that* sense. Indeed, the ontology of command and operativity runs counter to the idea that war could be ‘father of all’ and that, because of the location of war at the site of anteriority, no sense of self or soundness of mind, at least in the classical sense, can exist to enable the separation of things, to tame their wild profusion and avoid their dangerous mixtures, and, once having been ‘placed’ or ‘arranged’, each in its proper place, to keep them separated by their adherence to a proper field of knowledge. War is father of all wherefore the categories applied do not function as boundaries of things that localise their power of contagion – there are no dangerous mixtures to be avoided, since the identity of things remain but relationships of forces. All things appear in a recurrent confrontation where beings turn up and reveal their nature for a moment, but only to lose it and disappear into the resemblances of war that give birth to new gods, new slaves, and new masters. It is the site where war gives birth to all things, as things appear in a profound chain of resemblances. It is the site where war wanders off with words and things, men and gods, subjects and objects. It is the site where the *kosmos* and all that belongs to it, men, gods, animals, nature, are ‘steered’ [kubernaō] by war [polemos]. At the site of *polemos*, so difficult to express in our language, war glitters in universal resemblance with the Sovereignty of the Same.

The boundary we encounter when we read the fragment then is precisely the ontology of operativity and command. It is what renders it impossible in our knowledge to recognise the site at which the order of things is steered not by the command of men, gods, or masters, but by war. Specifically, what seems impossible to our knowledge, and what stands in stark contrast to the order we apprehend in one great leap – the things we allude to by the words ‘war’ and ‘self’ – is the absence of the ontology of operativity and command. Conversely, if we displace the axis of analysis to look at order from the point of view of

polemos, then what is indeed possible to think in our knowledge seems perhaps even more disturbing. From the vantage point of *polemos*, devoid of foundation in the ruling principle, we are compelled to discover the strangeness of the particularly pertinacious idea – so intimately related with Western political thought – that war is something you can govern, wage, win or lose, use as a means of securing the peace or of liberating those who are bound to servitude. That war is something that can be attributed to certain actors or traced to an origin, which can be determined as the source of war. Indeed, is this not how we always look for the general staff assuming that war is and has always been the effect of a command; that war is something the sovereign can decide upon and shape from strategic objectives derived from certain tactical interventions, that war is an instrument the state can master or an art in which practice the strategic mind is endowed with certain natural powers or special gifts. Continuing this line of thought, is the logical endpoint of the itinerary that emerged with the relationship of command and obedience not the instrumental ontology of war that has us arriving at the strange premonition that war is equal to the military institutions; that war is an entity one can install in an economy of violence to be kept, mobilised, or stored away for later use. In short, one must wonder if this is not how war has come to be recognised at the safe distance to being as an object one can administer from the Archimedean foothold of the command bunker.

In the final analysis, this is the thesis the present study will put forward for reflection: what we refer to as the paradigm of Western politics is a particular order of war, an order of war that once had its humble beginning when man, in applying the ruling principle [*arkhē*] to war [*polemos*] – the metaphysical exercise par excellence – once assumed the task of steering war. The first question political man asks himself, the dissertation argues, is not, as has been assumed, the innocuous question about how life according to the good might be procured through peace, law, and order, but rather a more basic question and primary *strategic* incitement: how can being be rendered governable or, in the vocabulary of the Greeks, how can *polemos* be subjected to steering; how can the relationships of opposites that make up the *kosmos* be conquered so as to put man on the one side in the struggle where he can fight,

win, and rule? The present analysis proceeds from the elaboration of this question, in turn, asking how it is that the relationship between being and war in the first place came to be discovered as a problem that required the solution found in the government of self. Who came up with the idea, the dissertation asks, of subjecting the kinship of man and war to steering, entailing a complete reversal of the order of things, as man and war came to change places?

Now is probably the time and place to admit that *The Order of War* is really not so much about war, then, as it is an inquiry into the problematisation of the subject as a political reference to life, emergent at the intersection of a certain mode of subjectivity and a certain idea of war, that with the emergence of the concept of war came to define an important part of the complex topological figure of the modern principle of sovereignty. When I, nonetheless, intend to study war, it is because the terrain of war is where political life [bios politikos] once appeared with idea of rendering life governable by command. Indeed, only within the horizon of the Greek experience of *polemos* will it be possible to decide whether the principle of steering war that once founded the Western idea of the political will have to be abandoned or will, instead, regain the meaning it lost in that very horizon where the problem of war was once discovered in man.

Situating the thesis

In asking these questions about how the relationship between war and man came to be problematised in the past, then, the intention is not so much to say something new about the history of the past as it is to contribute to what Foucault, in his lecture on Kant's *What is Enlightenment*, refers to as 'the history of the present' and the writing of a 'critical ontology of ourselves'. In this lecture, Foucault situates his thinking as a continuation of the philosophical ethos of critical inquiry that emerged with this seemingly marginal text in Kant. However, in the Kantian interrogation of the question of the Enlightenment vis-à-vis his own enterprise Foucault identifies the origin of an 'ontology of contemporary reality' in the sense of the emergence of modern philosophy as a certain mode of thinking, a critical impulse, in which philosophy, perhaps for the first time, begins to reflect upon the limits of its own thought:

The hypothesis I should like to propose is that this little text is located in a sense at the crossroads of critical reflection and reflection on history. It is a reflection by Kant on the contemporary status of his own enterprise. No doubt it is not the first time that a philosopher has given his reasons for undertaking his work at a particular moment. But it seems to me that it is the first time that a philosopher has connected in this way, closely and from the inside, the significance of his work with respect to knowledge, a reflection on history and a particular analysis of the specific moment at which he is writing and because of which he is writing. It is... the reflection on 'today' as difference in history and as motive for a particular philosophical task. (Foucault 1984: 36).

Foucault articulates his own project of critical inquiry in extension of this mode of thinking as "... a philosophical ethos consisting in a critique of what we are

saying thinking and doing through a historical ontology of ourselves.” (Ibid. 50). The critical ontology of ourselves, then, is a certain philosophical ethos that proceeds from an interrogation of ‘the pre-existing relation linking will, authority, and the use of reason’. In the outset, this requires releasing thought from “... a certain state of our will that makes us accept someone else's authority to lead us in areas where the use of reason is called for...” as when “... a book takes the place of our understanding, when a spiritual director takes the place of our conscience, when a doctor decides for us what our diet is to be.” (Ibid. 33). In other words, the critical ontology of ourselves examines the present not in terms of preconceived notions, theories or doctrines, but in terms its moral, philosophical, political, juridical, and historical conditions of possibility with a view to transgressing the limits imposed on being and thought:

The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them. [It is] a type of philosophical interrogation... that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject (Ibid. 39; 49-50).

Enlightenment, per Foucault, is in other words the ‘permanent critique of our historical era’ posited in terms of an experiment, an experiment situated at the intersection of ontological critique and historical analysis with the aim of providing access to another figure of truth of what we are, and what this present is that make up our reality. Naturally, this ‘methodology of enlightenment’ involves asking questions about this present, which is how the semantic field of formation is opened up to problematisation. In terms of the present study, the analytical interest that guides the dissertation originates from the problematisation of political modernity first posited by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* in terms of how the military organisation came to be invested in the relations of forces in a war fought for political order. How must we understand our present and ourselves, Foucault asks at the interstices of his critical inquiry,

if political order and the mode of subjectivity it affords have been shaped from the military organisation for war? How must we understand this present, Foucault elaborates in *The Will to Knowledge*, which, despite the promise of political order to ensure, maintain and develop the life of population in pursuit of peace and the flourishing of mankind, simultaneously allows for societies to become increasingly violent exacerbating war inter-socially and intensifying war among states. Indeed, as Foucault observed himself: "...wars were never as bloody as they have been since the nineteenth century, and all things being equal, never before did regimes visit such holocausts on their own populations." (Foucault 1998: 136-7). Tracing an itinerary from these questions and the answers Foucault provided with the analysis of disciplinary power, political sovereignty, and the thesis of biopolitics, the present study seeks to contribute to the writing of the ontology of ourselves articulated under the theme of the problem of war and the subject. In doing so, it extends the inquiry by re-problematising subjectivity and war on the terrain of ancient Greece, and this not out of speculative choice or a particular conviction to study the ancients, but because it is the historical period in which the relationship between man and war was first called into question.

More generally, the philosophical aspiration and analytical intent of the dissertation is located within the field of critical analysis that has come to constitute an important area of international relations and security studies over the last two decades. A wealth of literature exists in the tradition, which I will not try to do justice to in the form of a summary review.⁴ In the limited space available, I will instead focus on some important precursors within the tradition to the argument I will advance in these pages. Most important is the intellectual itinerary from which the tradition of critical inquiry derives its *raison d'être* as distinct from the general field of International Relations. In a sense, this begins with the question raised by Foucault on the history of the present we refer to as political modernity or, more precisely, that of liberal modernity. The question could be phrased thus: How is it that liberal modernity, as a political project

⁴ For an overview of critical inquiry in International Relations, see for example *Global Politics* (Edkins & Zehfuss 2013). For an excellent collection of essays on the broader thematic of the present thesis, see *Foucault on Politics, Security and War* (Dillon & Neal 2008).

based on peace and security in the service of mankind, has nevertheless been characterised not only by the recurrence of war, but also by the incessant pursuit of ways in which human life can be targeted for killing in war? As Julian Reid has observed, this is a paradox that International Relations, despite it being *the* discipline uniquely tasked with providing answers to the problem of war and peace, has not been analytically fit to solve: "As a discipline it has been and continues to be profoundly shaped by the influence of ideas drawn precisely from the tradition of thought and practice responsible for the generation of this paradox, liberalism." (Reid 2009: 3). In other words, the discipline is trapped in a kind of epistemological circularity in which, having been shaped from the very same system of thought that made the paradox possible in the first place, it cannot but affirm the paradox we already know instead of inquiring into how and to what extent it may be possible to think differently and go beyond it.

The epistemological task of finding a way out of this circularity between the analytical ordering codes of International Relations and the system of thought of liberal modernity is what warrants the turn to Foucault. One must avoid, Foucault explains in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (2008b: 42), the temptation of 'completing the blessed circle', and this is the task critical analysis assumes in its inception. In doing so, it invests International Relations with the philosophical ethos of writing the critical ontology of ourselves. Of particular importance here is the inaugural work done by Michael Dillon in the late 1980s in which the problematisation of security is divorced from structural and ontological relations to truth and redefined in terms of political practice. Of special significance to the argument to be deployed in the present study however is the line of thought developed in the *Politics of Security*. While further exposing the epistemological lacuna in International Relations, here Dillon interrogates the ontological account of human life as a form of life that always seems to be in the need of security. In providing an answer to the question, Dillon, rather than asking why modern regimes go about practicing security or inquiring into the essential nature of security (questions that always seem to end up completing the 'blessed circle' where essentialism affirms analytical intent and vice versa), Dillon asks, how is it that "... seeking security became

such an insistent and relentless (inter)national preoccupation for humankind?” (Dillon 1996: 15).

In asking *how* rather than *why* the epistemological crisis is avoided. Moreover, the semantic field of formation in which security appears is opened up to a re-problematisation, a re-problematisation that explains how the ontological account of life as distinguished *a priori* by its ‘being insecure’ and ‘in need of security’ is the account of life on which the principle of sovereignty of modern political regimes has been founded. The *how* question, in other words, puts the inquiry onto the analytical path of historical contingency and ontological critique that necessarily must go beyond modern concepts of sovereignty and security. If one is to understand how it is that life came to be rendered insecure as modern regimes began to exert a power over life, Dillon argues, then one must start by questioning how the problem of security came to be invested in Western political thought. In the tradition of critical inquiry, this would normally call for a genealogical inquiry or what we, in a strictly provisional way, could call an analysis of how the present came into being. However, in the *Politics of Security* Dillon proceeds by means of an archaeological reading that puts ‘security’ back into the semantic field of formation in which it once appeared on the terrain of ancient Greece.

The Greek sense of security as *asphaleia*, Dillon explains, had little to do with the modern notion of security even if, in Aristotle, it also concerns a matter of the *polis*. In fact, in the translation of Heidegger, *to asphales* means the ‘un-falling’, in the sense of what remains standing, and “... never the ‘certain’ and the ‘secure’ in the modern sense of *certitudo*.” (Ibid. 123). In the Greek experience of *asphaleia*, security was in other words recognised in terms of the ‘indissoluble relation between security and insecurity’ or what Dillon, in maintaining the irreducible duality of struggle and tension [*polemos*] found in *asphaleia*, denotes to as (in)security. In its original setting, (in)security must therefore be conceived antilogically. This is a critically important distinction. Ontologically, it informs of a system of thought in which truth is understood not as the one-sidedness of dialectical opposition, but rather as the coming-to-presence of relationships of concurrent opposites, that is, as *alētheia*. This is to say a system of thought that answers to the form of truth in which insecurity is to be found in

security, war in peace, night in day as the intimate and infinite relatedness of a constantly mobile whole. Epistemologically, this archaeological dig, in turn, enables the analysis to re-problematise the modern sense of security. From the point of view of *asphaleia*, then, it becomes possible to observe the modern sense of security as articulated in a division enabling the profound displacement in which insecurity has come to be understood as a certain object that can be if not eradicated then at least governed in the act of providing security:

Modern usage... proposes that there is a state of affairs – insecurity – and the negation of that state of affairs – security – and by doing so thoroughly represses the complexity not only of the act of securing but also of the inextricable relation between security and insecurity. It offers, instead, a simple dialectical opposition together with the implied promise that insecurity can always be mastered in principle if not in current practice.” (Ibid. 122).

There are some critical analytical precursors to be observed here in situating the present inquiry. Not only does it become obvious that the object of inquiry, in this case ‘security’, has a history, but also that this history is by no means linear or stable, but rather one of synchronic and diachronic problematisations that articulate intertextual overlays across different systems of thought. This is why, as I will explain in the ensuing chapter on method, the present analysis will proceed from the methodology of problematisation studying discrete discursive events simply because this is the way in which the object of inquiry can be brought to life and awakened from the slumber of the blessed, but endlessly repetitious circle in which knowledge is always referred back to the origin. On a final note, in putting back security into the setting in which it once appeared, the *Politics of Security* did something important. In the careful reading of (in)security as *asphaleia* it provided access to another figure of truth and a different mode of being thereby inscribing International Relations in the ethos of writing the critical ontology of ourselves, or as it is stated in the final chapter, the project of re-situating International Relations as a site ‘we are challenged to out-live’ (Ibid. 203).

Method

The present dissertation seeks to analyse the ways in which the relationship between the individual and war has been problematised through an ontology of operativity and command. By this I do not mean any stable or homogeneous entity as if sovereignty supposedly had pervaded all history from the ancients to the present. On the contrary, I simply mean to capture heuristically the common place of residence of a diverse multiplicity of discursive formations emergent in what we could call problematisations of the relationship between the individual and war. First, it is an attempt to analyse the Greek experience of *polemos*, and the modality of the order of war to which the exchanges of man owed their laws. I am concerned to show its developments from archaic Greece to the end of the period of classical Greece. Second, I will inquire into the emergence at the threshold of classical Greece of the notion of man as articulated in the principle of steering war and the elaboration of the self in the birth of the idea of rendering being governable. Third, I will examine the reworking of the classical theme of war and the subject in the divine art of ruling as it occurs in Christian thought, and, finally, how it came to find its way into its political form, the mortal divinity of Hobbes' Leviathan.

Put very schematically, the present inquiry has revealed two important displacements: the first appears at the threshold to classical Greece where the experience of *polemos* is gradually reworked by recourse to the ruling principle [arkhein] in the discovery of the mind. The ruling principle will be posited at the origin of things as classical thought uncovers in the *arkhē* of *kosmos* a principle for the government of self and others. This concerns the period we usually attribute to the birth of Western politics. The second marks the beginning of early Christian thought in which the Greek sense of *arkhē* would work loose of its foundation in being and the world of sensible things. Tracing the discourse

on the *arkhē* from archaic Greece to the end of the period of the later Roman Empire, the dissertation analyses the formation of the field of knowledge in which the ontology of operativity and command is displaced from the classical sense of being to be tied to the existence of God. Under the theme of divine governance, the classical sense of *polemos* inaugurated by the classical Greeks as private war is effaced in the reworking of the theme of the private war of self, which now appears no longer in relation to truth as *alētheia*, but in relation to divine truth devoid of foundation in being. The Greek subject of sound action becomes the Christian subject of true knowledge, as the principle of command and operativity is tied to ontologically to divine truth. Finally, having dispensed with the private war of self, the early modern subject turns up no longer in the problematisation of the relationship of self to war, but as given by the state of nature in the form of Hobbes' belligerent man. The ontology of operativity and command becomes the reference of political sovereignty to life, the dissertation explains, in a transformation that can be identified in the translation of the Greek notion of *polemos* [war] into the Latin *bellum*, in the reworking of the Platonic theme of the war of every man against every man in the public sphere into its Christian and modern secular forms, in the rendering of the ruling principle [*arkhē*] as the word of God [*logos*], which, eventually, will be identified with the will (of God) and, ultimately, the command of the sovereign.

Following Foucault's teachings on method, the dissertation employs the methodology of problematisation. As briefly discussed in the preceding chapter, this concerns, pace Foucault, a form of critique, which, in contrast to the search for formal structures with universal value, inquires into "... the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognise ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying." (Foucault 1984: 42). In terms of the present study, this could be translated into the observation that the objects of inquiry, war and the individual as well as their complex internal relationship, are conditioned upon what it means to be a human being as much as what it means to talk about the terrible War-God and the battle of Plataea, the steering of cosmos and the identity of nature, the divinity of rage and the problem of affect, the love of war and the serenity of peace. On a more basic note, it means that the analysis is formed on the basis of the observation that, since the objects of inquiry, war and

the individual, have a history, and since what has a history is not a universal, but contingent, then one must study the objects of inquiry in terms of the dispersed discursive events in which they have come to be problematised.

The aim is therefore not to write the ancient history of war, politics, and the subject, as if pretending to disclose these complex and diverse phenomena in their full historical significance. As I will explain in this chapter, the intention is to provide an analysis of specific semantic fields of formation that have been decisive in the coming to presence and change of the set of knowledges and practices that once made it possible to inscribe war and the individual in the political idea of steering. To this aim, I intend to study discrete discursive events, or what Foucault calls 'statements', concerning war and the subject rather than the formal structures we normally conceive of in the history of war and in the politico-philosophical account of the subject, be it Kantian reason or Hobbessian egoism. The analysis will therefore necessarily be one of apparently insignificant battles fought in the day-to-day warfare of discourse and not so much the study of actual battles having been fought or if they were orchestrated by the erudite Clausewitzian or whether victory came from below when the doctrine of Vegetius got rid of the peasant and gave man 'the air of the soldier'. This is not to say that I will not study the forms in which thought manifests itself in practices and vice versa, for this is exactly what I intend to do. It is to say that, in terms of method, one cannot limit the analysis to the point of view of the historiographical account of war, the study of battles or of the military sciences, just as one cannot leave the inquiry into the subject to political-juridical theory or transcendental philosophy. For we would thereby run the risk of ascribing to war and the individual a privileged form or identity and thereby get caught up in the kind of circularity from which there is no way out, but rather the infinite return to the origin.

So, instead of referring to a concept of war or a theory of the subject, one should rather, pace Foucault, try to analyse the different statements by which war and the subject have come to be constituted within a certain corpus of knowledge. This is what I mean when I, in the following, will argue that the intention is to study war and the subject, not from the point of view of politics, sovereignty, or law, but in terms of statements and the systems of thought in

which they have come to function so as to constitute a certain knowledge of war and the subject. The question of truth will in other words need to be held in suspension, as the inquiry displaces the axis of analysis from the study of a preconceived body of knowledge to the study that traces war and the subject in terms of their historical conditions of possibility. Drawing on Foucault, I intend to operationalise the methodology of problematisation in the form of 'archaeology' and 'genealogy' in the conscientious attempt of examining war and subjectivity, not from a preconceived body of knowledge, but as it appears in language, as it was spoken, and in exchanges as they were carried out. As I will explain in this chapter, the dissertation employs the method of archaeology to establish the synchronic structure of the ontology of command and operativity, that is, the structure that renders it intelligible as a regularity between a number of statements, be they on cosmos, virtue or war. Second, the analysis draws on the 'tactic' of genealogy to analyse the diachronic coming to presence and change of this structure that we, in providing some provisional signpost, may identify in its emergence as the idea of steering war and determine in its (preliminary) endpoint as the modern principle of political sovereignty.

But, as in any critical inquiry into the ontology of ourselves and the history of the present, pace Foucault, there is a negative work to be carried out first. We must rid ourselves of whole mass of notions, Foucault explains, each of which, in its own way may obscure the analysis of statements by installing the primacy of continuity over discontinuity, concept over contingency, transcendence over history, truth over being:

Take the notion of tradition: it is intended to give a special temporal status to a group of phenomena that are both successive and identical (or at least similar); it makes it possible to rethink the dispersion of history in the form of the same; it allows a reduction of the difference proper to every beginning, in order to pursue without discontinuity the endless search for the origin; tradition enables us to isolate the new against a back-ground of permanence, and to transfer its merit to originality, to genius, to the decisions proper to individuals. (Foucault 2008b: 23).

Following the advice provided by Foucault, in terms of the present study, one could start by getting rid of the notion of the state. The notion of the state makes possible a particular idea and rationality of war to which a series of politico-juridical properties are commonly applied; as if we could be sure that war had always existed at the politico-juridical extremities of the relations of forces, war is either recognised in a certain primitive or primordial form before sovereignty is instituted or it is seen at the point of its dissolution. According to this conception, then, war is believed to have emerged from its inception fully adequate to its own nature in what we could call a political economy of violence, an economy whose integrity is guaranteed precisely by the notion of the state. One must dispense with the notion of the state then, since contrary to the conceptual analyst who treats this arrangement of truth as the reality of war, the genealogist sees it as the expression of a particular order of war, which during the course of history may have developed from the most diverse forms propagated under most different regimes. When discussing war, the genealogist argues, one should in other words keep in mind that what we have learned to perceive by the term war and the concept of war is the effect of a realisation of certain historico-political possibilities that appeared at a given time, and which could have been different. What Clausewitz famously stated as an aphorism at the threshold of modernity – war is the continuation of politics pursued by other means – is certainly what has been true of the organisation of the knowledge of war from the inception of the modern Western state. However, since the genealogist cannot take for granted the sovereignty of politics over war, this particular schema of war and politics cannot be taken as a point of departure, but must rather be treated as a particular form of truth that emerged because of certain possibilities, which could have been different.

Moreover, one has to recognise such a figure of truth, not only in its distinct outlines, but also in its various shapes and forms, its morphology and numerous new beginnings that are called upon to inform us of an allegedly new reality of war. The post-Cold War period could be considered as one such ‘new beginning’ born from the strange experience of redemption, dissolution, and dissymmetry that gave rise to the political incident that rediscovered ‘humanitarian war’, but more recently, in the decade that has passed since

September 11th, the same war has been assured yet a new beginning under the prophetic guise of the conceptual analyst. Once again, new signifiers such as 'new' (Kaldor 2002), 'asymmetrical' (e.g. McKenzie 2000), 'network' (Der Derian 2002), 'cyber' (Clarke 2010) etc. are called upon to recapture war, which seems to have escaped its concept. While the conceptual analyst plays tag with war, the genealogist will cultivate the 'grammatical accident' of this game bequeathed to war where certain adjectives, while clearly informing us of a particular nature of behaviour involved among the actors implicated, do so precisely by recourse to the politico-juridical notion of sovereignty and the old schema of war and politics. Specifically, this late modern discourse on war is bound to the assumption that war has an essence that can be defined in the outset, one that war, supposedly, can now deviate from in order to take on a new identity, and one that war inevitably must return home to as war assumes its proper place in the order of things. The genealogist will await the emergence of such accidents, and, once unmasked as the apparition of an old figure of truth, will show how the conjuring up of new identities of war redraws the very boundaries of our political imagination that have engendered our understanding in the first place.

Truth, Foucault says, "... is undoubtedly the sort of error that cannot be refuted because it was hardened into an unalterable form in the long baking process of history." (Foucault 1971: 79). As Foucault explains in his important article on genealogical method, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, the tactic of genealogy is the relentless interrogation of this kind of error, using history to bring truth to the point where it splinters. Or when history can no longer contain this sort of error, when the truth of the thing splinters and loses its identity, as perhaps happened to war on September 11th, genealogy is not there to recover the remains of its lost unity. "War is the perpetuation of deliberate violence... war belongs to two categories of human experience... First it is a form of violence... Second, it is a member of a class of occurrences whose activity is 'injuring'..." (Jabri 2009: 11). War belongs to the register of 'deliberate violence', war cannot be separated from violence; war is violence. But is it necessarily so? Genealogy refuses the temptation of nostalgia that regresses back to the origin and whose function is to recover a presupposed essence of war at the moment when history can no longer contain this sort of error. The genealogist in other

words refrains from the venture into metaphysics, pace Foucault (1971: 78), since he is not under the illusion that it is possible 'to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities'. It is the idea 'that things are most precious and essential at the moment of birth', but from the vantage point of genealogy, there are no true or original identities of things to be found in history. When studying history, as opposed to metaphysics, the genealogist learns that things have no essence; "... if the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that 'there is something altogether different' behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in piecemeal fashion from alien forms." (Ibid.). The idea of disclosing the truth of things, the genealogist argues, is basically a 'metaphysical extension' derived from the belief that things once emerged at the site of the origin:

We tend to think that this is the moment of their greatest perfection, when they emerged dazzling from the hands of a creator or in the shadowless night of a first mourning... From the vantage point of an absolute distance, free from the constraints of positive knowledge, the origin makes possible a field of knowledge whose function is to recover it, but always in a false recognition due the excesses of its own speech. The origin lies at a place of inevitable loss, the point where the truth of things corresponded to a truthful discourse, the site of a fleeting articulation that discourse has obscured and finally lost. (Foucault 1971: 79).

There is no supreme origin, then, at the beginning of which a primordial truth emerges 'fully adequate to its nature'. What is found at the historical beginning is not the true or inviolable identity of things. On the contrary, beneath the utopias that assign identity, form, and unity to things one always finds the disparity of things, the heterotopias. Once detached from the metaphysics of the origin and the belief in that which has no history, Foucault explains in allusion to Nietzsche, must also dispense with concept and definition. As Nietzsche says in *The Genealogy of Morals*: "it is only that which has no history, which can be defined." (2003: 53). Insofar as the genealogist dwells on the concept of war, he stands detached from it, bracketing its familiarity, in order to analyse the theoretical and practical content with which it is and has been associated. The genealogist therefore finds that any affinity or fixed

identity between the twin-notions of 'war' and 'violence', their possible intersection and joining in the intentional act of the strategic mind, cannot be taken for granted, but have to be subjected to further investigation and perhaps, ultimately, abandoned. The analysis cannot take as point of departure the assumption that war is a phenomenon, which comes into being in the joining of action with violence by the subtle calculations of the strategist. Further, we cannot assume that war has always been inseparable from what we, in terms of certain moral codes, have come to think of as violence. For we would then presuppose that war has always been understood in terms of a set of universal norms that could be observed from the outside, as if an entire moral economy to all times had covered the surface of war. War is violence, you say. The genealogist would rather say that violence is perhaps the most carefully protected identity of war. In short, the genealogical inquiry cannot be based upon the assumption that war has always been a phenomenon, which, ultimately and inviolably, is related to violence and suffering.

So, rather than investing in the strange belief of a timeless truth about war, the genealogist seeks to interrogate this point of intersection, perpetuated by the late modern discourse on war, in which war always seems to be referred back to the notional set that places it on an axis of violence, as if neither war nor violence had a history of their own of conceptual problematisations if not raids, invasions, and subjugations. Indeed, one should rather ask questions about who came up with this idea of an in-disparity between war and violence, and of disclosing the intimate secrets of war as 'intent' and the moral corollary 'guilt'. We must ask whether in fact questions of intent and guilt have always permeated the understanding of war. We must, in short, inquire into the limits of our certainty of the truth articulated by this discourse that claims war to be given to experience as violence. Examining the empirical aspirations of the discourse that claims the unity of war and violence, genealogy learns that it was born in an altogether 'empirical' fashion – from metaphysics. What is found at the historical beginning of war, the discourse says, is the inviolable identity of violence, and since war is violence, war is always in the need to be subjected to the pacifying forces of the state. Have we then, the genealogist must ask, in fact not regressed back to the point that marks the return of Hobbes' sovereign in

whom peace once emerged dazzling from the hands of the creator, but in whom peace remains lost within the perpetual state of violence that must be suspended, but can never really be so because it is the very principle that makes peace possible and sustains it in the virtuality of war? Have we in short not arrived at the figure of truth that we, for the sake of convenience could call Hobbes' hypothesis of war, the figure of truth that posits the origin of war at the site of a primordial state of violence as the permanent backdrop of politics; the state of violence that exists before the state is instituted, remains contained in its virtuality in the figure of the sovereign when the state is born, and reappears beyond the state at the brink of its dissolution.⁵

Now, while Hobbes was clearly aware that the state of nature could be understood as a principle internal to the state, rather than as a real historical epoch, the late modern discourse on war, claiming the unanimity of war and violence, seems subject to the kind of error that happens in the intertextual overlay of new problematisations in which what, in Hobbes, is basically a thought-experiment, by simple mistake of calculation that was lost to the exteriority of accidents, now acquires the form of truth. Hence the problem posed to the present inquiry: if the 'sorting table' or tableau, to put it in Foucaultian terms, remains the figure of the state of nature and the principle of sovereignty, then the analysis of war will remain trapped within a sort of theoretical naturalisation of Hobbes' schema of war and politics being unable to perceive of war outside of this figure of truth, which once had its beginning as a politico-philosophical fiction. Indeed, one must not give in to the temptation of pursuing war in terms of the late modern signifiers of war in their seemingly endless proliferations such as 'new', 'asymmetrical', 'network', 'network-centric', 'cyber', and without doubt several other. So long as the tableau, pace Foucault remains Hobbes' state of nature, then the effort to establish new analytical coordinates for the analysis of war will never catch up with war, but rather remain in perpetual pursuit of war since war inevitably exceeds the attempt of specification by virtue of not corresponding to the analytical pretention that merely traverses the circularity of its own intrinsic logic.

⁵ See Agamben's analysis of the state of nature and the principle of sovereignty (1998: 35-38).

Now, since we should seek to avoid the kind of assertions that cling to the conviction that the state of violence is the human condition, we should perhaps instead postulate that this notion and reality of war has emerged through a series of intertextual overlays, displacements, reversals, errors or simple mistakes of calculation, and their successions in which the idea of trial by strength only in recent human history has acquired the singular identity of violence as the corollary to an obscene practice of annihilation. If, on the contrary, we were to maintain that war could be defined in terms of a particular form of violence, instrumental or intentional, public or private, by locating the thresholds where politics, supposedly, begins and ends, it would amount to an entirely tautological claim. One would assume of war to exist as the extension of a politics or strategy already in existence. Or better yet, if we pursue the same argument from the opposite side, one would assume of politics, that is if we still wish to maintain a separation between politics and violence, that it can only come into being by way of the suspension of this war, which was not there in the first place precisely by virtue of politics having not yet come into being. In short, if we were to maintain that war is violence, we would once again need to sacrifice war on the altar of positive truth reaffirming our faith in the peculiar idea of a politics that cannot come into being without making recourse to a state of violence it supposedly suspends. Clearly, the genealogical analysis cannot rely on such speculative discourse, nor can it afford such venture into fiction. This is not to say that to tell the truth about war and violence we should abandon the hypothesis of a relationship among them. It is to say that, perhaps, we should begin to consider violence as one among many possible relationships of war, and maybe not the most important.

Leaving the terrain of the Hobbessian hypothesis of war, one is, however, still left with the problem of how to analyse the relationship between war and man. The epistemological obstacle⁶ we encounter here in terms of analysis is what modern juridico-philosophical thought saw as a solution to order; the subject. It is Hobbes' rational egoist and Descartes' *cogito*, but it is also Rousseau's sociable subject who, upon retreating into the self, believed to have

⁶ I borrow the term epistemological obstacle from Gaston Bachelard (1949).

abandoned the confines of reason in favour of the immediacy of the senses.⁷ This is to say that the problem we encounter here does not so much concern the question of the modality of this subject, as it appears in the disputes on reason. It is rather a matter of the subject *per se* we learn of in the critique of these disputes: “there can be really no polemic of pure reason”, Kant said (2010: 502). Although we cannot know the nature of it, the subject is given to experience and so exists beyond dispute, Kant explained in the critique that rose above all disputes, and thus, by intent or out of accident, came to reaffirm its faithfulness to the law that grants the subject transcendence and assures the subject the privileged place in the idea of order as political sovereignty. In Kant, the transcendental subject, unchanging, eternal and yet indeterminate, would redraw the boundaries of the political imagination from which it once emerged. The sovereign subject would be reborn in the performativity of the critique, in quite a like manner to what Hobbes did with sovereignty, that is to bring out reason from the state of nature in the sanitation of man’s relationship with war:

Without the control of criticism, reason is, as it were, in a state of nature, and can only establish its claims and assertions by war. Criticism, on the contrary, deciding all questions according to the fundamental laws of its own institution, secures to us the peace of law and order, and enables us to discuss all differences in the more tranquil manner of a legal process. In the former case, disputes are ended by victory, which both sides may claim and which is followed by a hollow armistice; in the latter, by a sentence, which, as it strikes at the root of all speculative differences, ensures to all concerned a lasting peace. The endless disputes of a dogmatizing reason compel us to look for some mode of arriving at a settled decision by a critical investigation of reason itself; just as Hobbes maintains that the state of nature is a state of injustice and violence, and that we must leave it and submit ourselves to the constraint of law, which indeed limits individual freedom, but only that it may consist with the freedom of others and with the common good of all. (Ibid. 502-503).

In Kant, reason would shine in its raw being having emerged out of the state of nature. No longer plagued by the aletheic illusions of war that intruded on the

⁷ As Rousseau says in *L'état de guerre*: “If the natural law had been written only in the human reason, it would be little capable of directing most of our actions. But it is also engraved in the heart of man in inefficable characters... There it cries to him.” (Rousseau cited in Derrida 1997: 17).

rational faculty exposing the irreconcilability of ideas and the sensible world, the subject would denounce the state of war and pledge his allegiance to the constraint of the universal law, giving up strife and the war over reason. The chimeras of reason had been exorcised, but only to leave the subject in the naked form of sovereignty's reference to life.

Now, the genealogist cannot rely on this transcendental subject nor will he make flight from the battle over reason to reinvent a peace emergent from the state of nature that answers only to the laws of metaphysics. The subject lives of this state of nature, it seems, since sovereignty, conversely, always seems to be in the need of this belligerent subject in order to put an end to injustice, violence, and war. The genealogist suspects therefore that this subject, once illuminated by the *arkhē* of cosmos and since discovered in the eternal bliss of God and, ultimately, given transcendence, might be involved in the problem of war. Perhaps we should postulate, then, that the safe ground occupied by the transcendental subject might be menaced by the ontology of operativity and command in which an "I" posits itself at the site of the unchanging origin of the state of war. Since we cannot rule out this possibility, we must dispense with this "I" and the mode of being that animates it, the subject:

One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. And this is what I would call genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, and domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history. (Foucault 1980: 117).

Placing the safe ground of the subject in question, we shall refer the category of the subject to that of an 'empty' ontology leaving both the signifier and the signified in suspension.⁸ A minor digression into semiotics is in place at this point. Following Saussure, a thing is rendered intelligible in terms of a sign,

⁸ In fact, we will dismiss the traditional question of ontology. As Heidegger explains in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, the question of ontology has a history of its own, one that begins in the seventeenth century, constituting itself on the belief of ordering the world of things. (2000: 43-44).

a sign that in Saussure is divided into the signifier, which is the utterance of the word that denotes the thing (its 'sound-image'), and the signified, which is the actual content of the thing. According to Saussure, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary or, as Saussure says, the relationship is unmotivated. While the letters 'w-o-m-a-n' together forms the assemblage that spells woman, they do not embody 'womanness'. Accordingly, the French 'mouton' is not similar to the English 'sheep' since 'mouton' means both 'mutton' and 'a living sheep'. The signifier in other words does not reflect the signified then. On the contrary, pace Saussure, the relationship is arbitrary. Now, the distinction Foucault introduces to the theory of the sign and signification in Saussure is basically that not only is the relationship between the signifier and the signified arbitrary, the signifier and the signified are themselves arbitrary:

The fact that two enunciations are exactly identical, that they are made up of the same words used with the same meaning, does not, as we know, mean that they are absolutely identical. Even when one finds, in the work of Diderot and Lamarck, or of Benoît de Maillet and Darwin, the same formulation of the principle of evolution, one cannot consider that one is dealing in each case with the same discursive event, which has been subjected at different times to a series of repetitions. (Foucault 2008b: 159).

In effect, pace Foucault, in the analysis of discursive events both the signifier and the signified must be left in suspension. Leaving the signifier and the signified in suspension, the analysis must instead be made in terms of statements that, at the site of a contingent historical trajectory, may account for how the particular identities of man and war have come into being. Studying war and the subject in terms of their historical conditions of possibility in other words allows us to escape the possible entrapments of the ruling principle and the logic of operativity and command that appears inextricably bound up with the subject. Turning Kant's subject on its head, the genealogical inquiry resituates the analysis on the battleground of historical contingency. Against the truth of the transcendental subject, once withdrawn to an unattainable world where it was 'given the double role of consolation and imperative', genealogy

seeks the historical remedy of exposing transcendental truth to war, showing how such truth appropriates the right 'to refute error and oppose itself to appearance' (Foucault 1971: 77-79). In tracing a certain field of knowledge concerning war to the ancients, the ambition of the present analysis then is not to discover the true subject or the true form of war. I do not mean to return man or war to the 'domain of the original'. The objective is much less ambitious however far more difficult to achieve. Specifically, it is to extract, neither one true form of war nor an essence of being, but rather to map the battlefield in which multiple weapons, one pitted against the other, and forged from several discourses and practices of war, slowly constituted an order of war. It is to trace 'the complex course of descent', pace Foucault, maintaining 'local battles' in their proper historical dispersion, which is how, while taking these precautions into account, we must now give a more positive content the philosophical ethos of problematisation.

As I will explain in the following, this involves, on the one hand, archaeology, and on the other, genealogy. First, it is important to note that while the archaeological method is sometimes considered as a different methodology distinct from genealogy, this is not the way in which Foucault thought about it. It is true, however, that, in the earlier work of Foucault in *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, the archaeological analysis tended to focus on rupture and epistemic shifts while, in his later work, Foucault seems to have orientated the analysis towards a reading that to a higher degree acknowledges discursive formations in terms of intertextual overlays in which discoursivities invoke one another and not so much in terms of epistemic ruptures. Another important distinction is that, in his earlier work, problematisation in Foucault seems to concern epistemic shifts discretely, which are not so much, at least explicitly, guided by concerns of the present. Not before his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in 1970, published in French as *L'ordre du discours* [The Order of Discourse], do we find an explicit orientation toward the present. In this lecture, Foucault, in extension of archaeology, announces a new analytical project, one which is oriented towards the writing of the history of the present, a project he designates 'genealogy'.

Six years later, Foucault, in his lecture series at Collège de France, *Society Must be Defended*, has arrived at the following general definition: "Archaeology is the method specific to the analysis of local discoursivities, and genealogy is the tactic which, once it has described these local discoursivities, brings into play the desubjugated knowledges that have been released from them." (Foucault 2004: 10). As it appears in the passage, Foucault did not consider archaeology and genealogy to be alien, but, on the contrary, to constitute two congenial modes of analysis that operationalise problematisation. In Foucault's lecture on Kant's *What is Enlightenment* the relationship between genealogy and archaeology is further delineated here in the context of problematisation:

[This form of] criticism is not transcendental, and its goal is not that of making a metaphysics possible: it is genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method. Archaeological – and not transcendental – in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom. (Foucault 1984: 42).

The relationship between archaeology, genealogy, and problematisation could then be described as following. Proceeding from a problematisation oriented toward present concerns, one begins by asking, genealogically, how this present has become logically possible. Situated in the present, the analytic intention of the analysis is posed as a 'strategic' and diachronical question then. To enable the analysis of the diachronical coming to presence of the present, one begins, employing the method of archaeology, by analysing synchronically the field of 'local discoursivities' in which one, guided by the strategic analytical interest of genealogy, seeks to uncover the unthought connections, patterns,

encryptions, and relations that make up the fabric of what Foucault refers to as 'subjugated knowledges'. In turn, subjugated knowledges are brought into play genealogically as desubjugated knowledges in writing the history of the present.

Now, subjugated knowledges are not to be confused with 'suppressed' or 'repressed' opinion as such. It can well be that the excavated subjugated knowledge expresses a certain marginalised discourse, but nor is marginalised discourse to be conflated with oppression or repression. These forms of knowledge can just as well represent forgotten ideas, thoughts, opinions, theories or practices that for one reason or another no longer appears in the field of established knowledge. As Foucault explains in *Society Must be Defended*: "When I say "subjugated knowledges,"... I am referring to historical contents that have been buried or masked in functional coherences of formal systematizations... Subjugated knowledges are, then, blocks of historical knowledges that were present in the functional and systemic ensembles, but which were masked..." (Foucault 2004: 7). That being said, Foucault stresses the importance of the functioning of power in the formation of discourse and the constitution of knowledge, and this is the second way in which he conceives of subjugated knowledge: "When I say "subjugated knowledges," I am also referring to a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naïve knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity..." (Ibid.).

Knowledge, pace Foucault, is in other words always inscribed in power relations, but power, most importantly, is neither to be understood as essentially oppressive or repressive, nor is it to be seen as a general system of domination, such as the state and its institutions. On the contrary, power, Foucault explains in a famous passage of the *Will to Knowledge*, is a relationship. In fact, power is but a relationship of forces:

By power, I do not mean 'Power' as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience and the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one

group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivations, pervade the entire social body. The analysis, made in terms of power, must not assume the sovereignty of the state, the form of law, or the over-all unity of a domination are a given in the outset; rather, these are only the terminal forms power takes. It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization: as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them... (Foucault 1998: 92).

The point of view that allows one to analyse power then is not to be sought out in the originary existence of a central point or in a 'unique source of sovereignty', but rather, says Foucault, in "... the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the later are always local and unstable." (Ibid. 93). Local discoursivities always appear immanent the multiplicity of force relations, which, accordingly, are never set, but rather a constantly moving tangle of patterns, of intertextual overlays, of confrontations and struggles, of overlapping terms, of new interpretations, and the correlational ways in which these do not simply define a semantic field formation, but also, as the expression of a certain form of truth, offer a resource that is put to political use. This is how, among other things, local discoursivities are also a field of power, that is, a multiplicity of force relations that can be invested strategically. Truth in other words is part of a strategic game where discourse not only produces truth, but also, in effect of being inscribed in a relationship of force, displaces and refigures other forms of truth as subjugated knowledge. Truth in Foucault then is aletheic truth in the sense of truth as emergent in the relationship of struggle, opposition, and tension between knowledge and subjugated knowledge.

As a study of subjugated knowledge, understood as fragmented, broken-up, and dispersed knowledges that in view contemporary systems of thought have lost the internal connections and relations, archaeology necessarily involves an inventive and experimental process of recreating lost patterns among seemingly unrelated discoursivities. Since subjugated knowledge is defined by having no immediately intelligible form, when establishing the relationship or pattern of

regularity among local discoursivities the archaeologist must therefore carry out an experiment. Among other things, this is what Foucault has in mind when he speaks of the critical ontology of ourselves in terms of 'an experiment'. Schematising a great deal, one could say that the archaeologist 'fictions' a reality not yet in existence, a certain regularity which is not immediately intelligible, and then articulates this fiction in the form of a hypothesis, which is then put to the test in the form of exposing it to history. But on the basis of what unit of analysis does archaeology proceed then in order to dig out subjugated knowledge?

First, it is important to note that, while archaeology is a method of analysing discourse, it does not proceed from the tenets of so-called discourse analysis that studies sentences and propositions on the basis of their face value to infer from them the hidden meaning of why certain actors might do or say what they do. Nor is it to be confused with the form of analysis that interprets the text by ascribing to it a certain logic from the outside in the form of a canon or in the form of the tradition in which the author supposedly writes and on the basis of which the text must be read. Indeed, archaeology is not the study of sentences or propositions, subjects or objects, nor does it make use of external corrections. On the contrary, from the point of view of archaeology, the analysis must avoid performing external interpretive gestures, which are there to fill the void that appears when present ordering codes no longer suffice in making sense of the text. As Foucault explains, they are "... synthesizing operations of a purely psychological kind (the intention of the author, the form of his mind, the rigour of his thought, the themes that obsess him, the project that traverses his existence and gives it meaning)..." (Foucault 2008b: 32-33). To uncover subjugated knowledge, archaeology concerns itself with something altogether different, that is, *statements*, which, unlike words, propositions, and sentences, do not become intelligible before the entire discursive field is set free from all syntheses of the above mentioned kind that are accepted without question.

Following Foucault, we could describe statements as functional linguistic containers operating at the level of discourse. Statements, therefore, are not to be confused with words or propositions, nor are they to be understood as fixed entities or identities. By virtue of being immanently inscribed in a field of power,

statements are never set. This is how one should rather think of statements, not in terms of identity or essence, but in terms of performativity. In short, statements *function*. The functioning or performativity of statements is that which gives form to words and propositions making their meaningful utterance possible. This is because statements, in contrast to words, propositions, and phrases, contain their own function of subject, object, and concept. In the study of statements, then, language is untied from subjects and objects and treated as autonomous in its own functioning as discourse. This is why, when analysing statements, not only the point of view of the signified must be suspended, but also that of the signifier (Ibid. 111). That is to say, the study of statements is in a sense the study of autonomous functional variables insofar as they, in the functioning of discourse, produce their subject, object, and concept. This also to say, most importantly, that statements have a veridical function or, put differently, statements produce truth precisely by establishing, re-establishing or destroying certain relations between and among subjects, objects, and concepts by which they become intelligible in a certain way. In turn, this is how discourse must be studied in terms of fabrications of truth emergent from the active deployment of statements. In the study of statements, which together with other statements constitute a discourse, being and truth are consequently objects of inquiry rather than points of departure, the analytical vantage point being the constant formation or coming into being in the autonomous functioning of discourse of both the speaker and the objects of which he speaks.

Now, having embarked on the study of statements and thus dispensed with the body of preconceived knowledge and any 'psychological' interpretive gesture, one obviously begins from a vast field of knowledge, a field constituted in the totality of accepted and subjugated knowledges. This is defined, pace Foucault, as "... the totality of all effective statements (whether spoken or written), in their dispersion as events and in the occurrence that is proper to them." (Ibid. 29). Following Foucault, one is then led to the project of studying discourse in terms of events or, as Foucault says, the '*pure description of discursive events*' that seeks 'to steer clear of all interpretation' (Ibid. 29). This is to say; to the archaeologist one must rely on the discursive event in itself rather than trying to interpret the event from a position situated outside of it. In

archaeology, then, one does not, as in hermeneutics, employ interpretation as a heuristic tool by which one can obtain the truth of statements. Interpretation relies on the notion of context, which introduces elements that may not belong to the discursive event. But while statements cannot be brought to enunciate their meaning by aligning them to context through interpretation nor is there any reason to attempt at doing so. The discursive event contains in itself the full meaning, whereas context remains outside of the discursive event and as such has no given truth-value.

When trying to establish the meaning of discursive events, the archaeological method involves a different approach. Drawing on the notion of 'palimpsestuous reading', as articulated by Sarah Dillon, we can further explain the archaeological task of making sense of statements and, in turn, connect it to genealogy. Schematising a great deal, we can say that Foucaultian reading is a form a palimpsestuous reading in the sense that both treat the discursive event as a palimpsest, that is, as a site at which meaning is produced in the recurrent intertextual articulation, which is discourse. A palimpsest is the site where the 'original' text is simultaneously erased by an overlaid inscription and preserved as fragments of the original text are reinscribed intertextually. With perfect lucidity Dillon explains how, when making sense of the palimpsest, a palimpsestuous rather than palimpsestic reading is called for. Since the palimpsest structure is not constituted as a simple compilation of texts, one must "... seek to trace the incestuous and encrypted texts that constitute the palimpsest's fabric. Since those texts bear no necessary relation to each other, palimpsestuous reading is an inventive process of creating relations where there may, or should, be none; hence the appropriateness of its epithet's phonetic similarity to the incestuous" (Dillon 2007: 83). By contrast, the 'palimpsestic' reading, pace Dillon, treats the palimpsest as a mere compilation of knowledge that can be deciphered or unravelled in order to discover its hidden meaning in the kind of erroneous quest Foucault calls the search for the origin. Most importantly, and this is a critically important distinction, similar to Foucaultian problematisation as the pure description of discursive events, a palimpsestuous reading necessarily involves an experiment in the sense of creating relations where apparently there is none. Dillon accurately captures

this a process in which one “attempts to negotiate and do justice to the interrelatedness of the texts on the palimpsest’s surface.” (Ibid).

Now what guides this process of negotiation is what Foucault refers to as establishing the ‘logical space’, which can be understood as a sort of grid of intelligibility or system of correlation for the formation and transformation of discourse. This is done at the level of discourse, that is, at the palimpsest’s surface rather than at the superimposed level of ‘context’. In making sense of statements, archaeology replaces the notion of context with the notion of the logical space. Contrary to the analysis that relies on context to produce meaning, the logical space contains in itself the meaning of statements, which in the notion of context is ascribed from outside precisely by interpretation. A logical space is, in other words, the logic that can be deciphered from discourse at the level of the discourse. At this point, we can now close the circle and return to genealogy. Genealogy is precisely the term Foucault introduces to account for how, once a logical space is established, one must then relate it diachronically thus bringing into play the desubjugated knowledges of the past in order to explain how a particular state of affairs has become logically possible in the present (Foucault 1980: 193).

In terms of the present study, we could say that archaeology is a method of desubjugating the knowledge of war and the subject by putting them back into the semantic field of formation from which they emerged, whereas genealogy is the tactic that then brings the subjugated knowledges together in order to explain the emergence and succession of the ontology of operativity and command. In tracing the succession and displacement over time of the logical spaces involved in this genealogy, the genealogist divides history into ‘episodes’ or ‘effective history’ to show the trajectory of specific historical formations and their development. This is what I meant when, in the beginning of this chapter, I said that the intention is not to convey the full density or historical thickness of the epochs involved. The genealogist is not under the impression that such an analysis is indeed possible, and, more importantly, it is not the aim of genealogy. The genealogical analysis studies war and the subject in terms of episodes in order to reconstruct their ‘effective history’ of the specific truth, identity, and reality, which have come to govern our understanding in the present. Now, to

substantiate these formations of truth, that is, to produce 'evidence' of this effective history, genealogy proceeds by means of demonstration and example, using examples that when grouped together in a series of logical spaces constitute episodes. The example is in other words central to the genealogical argument, wherefore it is useful to further explain its function in genealogy. Since genealogy sets out to study formations of truth rather than fixed identities or essences, it follows that an example is not selected on the basis of what is commonly held as the truth of things. On the contrary, an example is selected on the basis of the hypothesis it is intended to exemplify: "An example is not cut out of a corpus of evidence on the basis of its representativeness in relation to a preconstituted field, since what is to be represented is a matter of what is exemplified. Rather, and as with Aristotle, an example is selected on the basis of its multiplicity and excess within a hypothetically determined field; an example is chosen on the basis of a hypothetical rule which governs the formation of examples within this field, and then used to support the hypothesis of such general rule." (Bartelson 1995: 8).

The example, then, functions to provide evidence of the hypothesis of the general rule and the logical space in question rather than affirming an established truth belonging to a preconstituted field of knowledge. This is why, in a genealogical inquiry, one should not look for the 'evidence', at least in the common historical or empiricist sense of exhaustiveness and compilation, upon which the examples used are based. Doing genealogy means to provide an exemplary and episodically oriented analysis, which, in contrast to the inductive analysis that reverses the relationship between theory and truth, because it relies on history, tradition or canon to provide the hypothesis, uses history to test and exemplify a hypothetically determined field. While this analytical strategy may seem idiosyncratic, it arises from the strict methodical vantage point of genealogy where text is studied as a source of examples rather than read as a container of truth (Ibid.). In doing so, my selection of texts and the use of examples may often seem to reverse the central and the peripheral. This is not because the different or the exotic constitutes a value in itself. It is because a reversal of what is held to be central and peripheral often occurs when one, in striving for a pure description of discursive events that seeks to avoid

interpretation, studies the actual statement. Any apparent reversal, then, is reflective of a decision to analyse truth and knowledge as delineated in this chapter, and from the point of view of what is central to the writing of a genealogy of how war and the subject have been constituted in Western politico-philosophical thought through an ontology of operativity and command. Far from expressing an arbitrary or idiosyncratic conviction, it is an attempt, as Foucault once called for in a passage of *The Use of Pleasure* (Foucault 1992: 8-9), at carrying out a methodically rigorous and self-conscious inquiry into how and to what extent it may be possible to think differently rather than legitimating what we already know.

Summing up, Foucaultian archaeology and genealogy are congenial methods employed in this study to operationalise problematisation. Archaeology and genealogy are not about doing a so-called close reading of a select few authors whose texts are selected on the basis of a preconceived canon, such as in some traditions within International Relations wherein one is allowed to invest in the (from a Foucaultian perspective) inherently idiosyncratic and methodologically problematic belief that one can meaningfully cherry pick e.g. three authors and then examine them on the basis that they supposedly belong to a certain tradition, even if the tradition in question had no existence by the time one or several of the texts selected were actually written. On the contrary, working on the basis of Foucault, 'cherry picking' is what one appears to be doing when piecing together, palimpsestuously, statements to analyse a semantic field of formation. This involves a more complex cartographic analysis, since a semantic field of formation cannot be referred to any single author or text nor can it be referred back to any privileged point of articulation or origin. Foucaultian analysis consists precisely in the piecing-together of the network of statements made by several authors where one author is no more 'true' or 'originary' than the other. On the contrary, it is precisely the co-variance of the statements made by several authors that constitute proof of the hypothesis the analysis is intended to demonstrate. In piecing together statements to establish the logical space or system of correlation, statements are selected as examples on the basis of the hypothesis they are intended to exemplify. This is to say that an example is chosen on the

basis of a hypothetical rule, which governs the formation of examples within this field, and then used to support the hypothesis of such general rule.

Concerning literature and the selection of texts in Foucaultian method, looking at the character of the secondary literature listed by Foucault one can gain insight into what guides the archaeological and genealogical inquiry. The literature cited by Foucault is often marginal or peripheral. It is also somewhat sparse. This is neither because Foucault was not familiar with the literature nor because of some strange or idiosyncratic conviction not to cite authority. On the contrary, the apparent absence of secondary sources, on which arguments purportedly are to be built following the conventions of empiricist positivism, happens precisely because of the methodological conviction that text, that is to say primary text, is analysed for the semantic value of statements that contain in themselves the full discursive event. In other words, Foucault rarely cites authority simply because it distorts the 'pure description of discursive events'. In fact, one runs the risk of destroying the palimpsest and of putting the analysis on the path which marks the return of the blessed circle. Accordingly, the selection of texts or, more precisely, the selection of discursive events, that inform the present inquiry is not made on the basis of their belonging to a pre-existing body of work, be it a canon, tradition or even, *pace* Foucault, 'the book itself'. On the contrary, having dispensed with 'the book', discursive events are selected with a view to providing exemplifications in support of the general hypothesis. Since the selection made does not pretend, either, to exhaust the field of knowledge that defines a tradition, one could argue that providing justification for the selection of text has a limited added value, since justification is provided precisely in the possibility of establishing the logical space or system of correlation, which through exemplification demonstrates and supports the hypothesis.

When I, nonetheless, will explain what has guided my selection, it is with a view to providing signpost of how the selections made provide *exemplifications* in support of the thesis. Specifically, concerning Greek texts the following grounds are provided as justification. I read Homer's *Iliad* because it is exemplary in the way it demonstrates how, in the world of archaic Greece, the relationship between man and war does not know either the idea of the subject

who has a mind [nous] and a soul [psukhē] or the idea of the ruling principle [arkhē]. Moreover, taken together with the Fragments of Heraclitus, it provides exemplification of the experience of *polemos* as a means of providing access to another figure of truth of war and man. In turn, the archaeology of *polemos* then serves the double purpose of also constituting a point of articulation that situates the genealogical critique. I move on from the oratory tradition of Homer to study genealogically the coming to presence of a different understanding of the relationship of man and war in tragedy. I read the classical tragedies of Sophocles *Ajax* and *Antigone* not in the belief of having exhausted either texts or the rich and diverse tradition of Greek tragedy, but in providing evidence of the semantic shift that occurs in these texts. I read *Ajax* because it is one of the first examples in which we can see how tragedy inquires into the relationship between man and war as form of concern or problematisation of the relationship, at the point in time when the individual has not yet acquired the consistency of the Aristotelian *psukhē* capable of will [boulēsis], and yet gradually begins to refigure the ordering codes of war and being. *Antigone* is read for several purposes. First, it is read as an example of how the new relationship of man and war is rewritten in the shift that occurs with the emergence of the idea of ruling by decree [kērugma] rather than *nomos* [custom] in which we find one of the first vague expressions of the principle of ruling by command emergent in the sovereign's pursuit of the good. Second, *Antigone* is read for the insight the text offers as a semantic field of formation on how a new apolitical subject emerges out of the struggle between the sovereign [arkhōn, leader], who intervenes in the relations of forces beyond his rightful sphere of influence, and the *hērōinē* who brings a fury to bear on the sovereign activity of command. What emerges is the theme of the individual who is without a *polis* [apolis], a theme that will play a critical role in classical political thought, most importantly, in Aristotle's definition of man.

I read Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* because in it we find one of the first clearly delineated articulations of the classical political economy of war and the subject. At stake is no longer so much the singular warrior fighting in a rage, but rather the citizen soldier and the general governed by the relationship of command. Also I read Thucydides to study the entry of the

knowledge of war into a new system of thought, in which history begins to acquire continuity with the political economy of war and the subject in the birth of the first politico-historical discourse. Classical politico-philosophical texts are read as a means of exemplification of the emergence of the idea of steering war and how the principle of command and operativity came to invest political order, war, and the subject. Latin texts are read for the value they offer on informing of the transformation of the ruling principle within the idea of divine governance, which opens up the terrain for the emergence of the modern idea of sovereignty. From the point of view of what might constitute central texts in the corpus of knowledge that makes up classical political thought, there are obviously certain omissions. For example, I could have carried out an analysis of the political culture of the Cynics and Foucault's analysis on the potentiality of subjectivation in the truth-telling practices of *Parrhesia*. I could also have carried out a study Plato's Statesman to provide for a more nuanced and elaborate analysis of the discontinuities in the account of the ruling principle and the richness of classical politico-philosophical culture. However, the texts chosen or rather the statements chosen are selected with a view to providing an account of the specific archaeology of the ruling principle and the effective history of the genealogical coming to presence of the ontology of operativity and command.

Finally, a word on the Greek and Latin texts studied in this dissertation and how they are read to support the thesis is appropriate. As stated in these pages, the analytical interest of the present dissertation does not concern the Greeks. The dissertation is not so much a philological inquiry into the Greeks, as it is an inquiry into the history of present. However, to trace the semantic fields of formation, the dissertation interrogates certain key terms drawing on official translations (sourced from the Perseus Digital Library unless otherwise noted). Key terms in Greek are put in square brackets to provide signpost of the semantic field of formation. Take for example the word *agein* [action], which in archaic Greece has no relation to the form of a conscientious mind acting in the world. I refer to the original word in order to demonstrate how it is rearticulated through intertextual overlays to attain a different meaning in classical philosophy, as something the mind is capable of by means of a certain

sense of will [boulēsis]. Another example could be drawn from the analysis of Aristotle's definition of man. In this reading of Aristotle, original Greek terms are listed when articulating the logical space in which Aristotle's definition appears and, in turn, listed as references of subjugated knowledge in support of the hypothesis the example is intended to demonstrate.

Unless otherwise noted, original Greek and Latin quotations are sourced from the Perseus Digital Library. Greek is translated directly into English rather than via Latin transliteration. In terms of most proper names, however, I use the Latin transliteration since this is likely how they are familiar to the reader.

§ 1 *Inverting the Concept of War*

How, when and why was it noticed or imagined that what is going on beneath and in power relations is a war? When, how and why did someone come up with the idea that it is a sort of uninterrupted battle that shapes peace, and that the civil order – its basis, its essence, its essential mechanisms – is basically an order of battle? Who came up with the idea that civil order is an order of battle? [...] Who saw war just beneath the surface of peace; who sought in the noise and confusion of war, in the mud of battles, the principle that allows us to understand order, the State, its institutions, and its history? (Foucault 2004: 47).

1.1 So Foucault situates the problem to be investigated in the course of his 1976 lecture series at Collège de France, *Society Must be Defended*, a question he would pursue in the attempt at finding a way out of the problem of war and political modernity he had articulated with the thesis of biopolitics in *The Will to Knowledge*. Specifically, in these pages Foucault pursues a methodology that would enable the analysis to disengage the mode of subjectivity from the procedures and techniques of subjectification by which life, in biopolitics, comes to be simultaneously pacified, mobilised, and put to use in the various economies of the state, in particular those of war and economy. In this lecture series, then, we find Foucault stating the intention of this year's lecture to study modern power in terms of an analytic that escapes the 'economic' model of power prevalent at the time, in particular, in Marxist theory. The economic model of power, Foucault explains, entails a mode of analysis that pertains to the notion of power being essentially repressive and as having a certain substance as something that can be "... given, exchanged or taken back, that it is something that is exercised and that it exists only in action." (Ibid. 14). But if power is in fact the implementation and deployment of a relationship of force, Foucault argues, then perhaps one should not try to analyse power in terms of the system

of correlation that in fact enables and sustains the economic model, but rather in terms what precedes it in the struggle that came before this particular arrangement, that is, to study power in terms of war:

Rather than analyzing it [power] in terms of surrender, contract, and alienation, or rather than analyzing it in functional terms as the reproduction of the relations of production, shouldn't we be analyzing it first and foremost in terms of conflict, confrontation, and war? (Ibid. 15)

Foucault contends: "Power is war, the continuation of war by other means", Foucault argues as he inverts Clausewitz's famous proposition to state that politics is the continuation of war by other means (Ibid). Now, displacing the axis of analysis to look at power from the vantage point of war, Foucault traces an itinerary on the subjugated knowledge of the discourse on private war, as it appeared before the institution of the state. Foucault explains how society, according to this discourse, was considered as completely permeated by warlike relationships; that war was regarded as a social relationship and the primal and basic state of affairs. Here, Foucault embarks on detailed genealogical inquiry into the struggles of seventeenth-century England while extending the analysis into premodern history to demonstrate the pattern of how politico-historical knowledge, as a form of subjugated knowledge, tells the history of how truth, law and order have come into being from conquests and pillages, how the 'law was born in burning towns and on ravaged fields'; in fact, how history has progressed from struggle to struggle in the writing and rewriting of the same war.

The discovery by Foucault of this historico-political knowledge of war and the subject as an agent of private war, in turn, enables Foucault to look at war and the subject, as they are represented in the major traditions of political theory, from the opposite side of the system of correlation of the law, sovereignty and the contract that sustains this representation. Reading Machiavelli and Hobbes from the point of view of war, Foucault challenges the traditional readings of *The Prince* and *Leviathan*. While Hobbes, Foucault explains, has been understood as if not a theoretician of war then at least as the

protagonist of war seen as an omnipresent state given by nature. Far from being the protagonist of private war, Foucault explains, the primitive state of the 'war of every man against every man' in Hobbes's state of nature must rather be seen as a discourse on peace, law and order. Contrasting Hobbes with the now desubjugated knowledge of historico-political discourse that claims war to be the irreducible and permanent relationship of forces in which society and social relations consist, Foucault explains how, in Hobbes, the state of nature exists as a fictional principle that allows for the justification of the theory of the State (the principle of sovereignty, the monopoly on war, the teleology of peace). The discourse of Hobbes, then, is the exact opposite of the discourse on private war that claims war cannot belong to the State. This argument, in turn, has Foucault arguing most convincingly that in making recourse to the principle of the state of nature in the constitution of political sovereignty and the monopolisation of war, the state does in fact not put an end to war. Rather, war, in the sense of the Hobbessian state of nature, is contained in its virtuality in the principle of sovereignty as the cipher of the form of peace that modern societies realise.

Now, the discovery of counter-state strategic discourse, while initially opening up to problematisation the field of knowledge that governs the state-centric ontology of war and the subject, is not entirely reassuring to Foucault. In fact, it would be mistaken, Foucault realises, to conceive of this discourse simply in terms of a certain deliberative potential. Foucault realises this when tracing the complex course of descent of history in which he uncovers the idea of 'race' as the point of articulation of the counter-state discourse. In its original setting, Foucault explains, race denoted nothing but a distinction between different peoples, which for historical reasons have come to find themselves on one side in a struggle against another race or people. Later, as the discourse on race is adopted by the French aristocracy at the end of the reign of Louis XIV, it is refigured into a hierarchical discourse of domination and submission that claims the superiority of the aristocratic race, and how history has bequeathed to this race certain rights and privileges. At this point, in the historico-political discourse on private war, private war turns into a struggle between races, a struggle which, ultimately, is turned against the state as counter-state strategic discourse at the point in time when the rights and privileges of the nobility,

including the right of private war, are usurped by the state. What happens, then, Foucault is careful to explain is not the state putting an end to the war among races. Rather, and this is a critical distinction for Foucault, in the monopolisation of war the modern state colonises the counter-state discourse and assimilates the discourse on race war inverting it to its own ends. As the state assumes control over war, the discourse on 'race war' is in other words not suspended, but refigured into a discourse that no longer speaks of race in terms of the 'battle that has to be waged between races', but rather of race "... portrayed as the one true race, the race that holds power and is entitled to define the norm, and against those who deviate from the norm, against those who pose a threat to the biological heritage..." (Ibid. 61). Writing in *The Will to Knowledge*, it was precisely under the theme of race that Foucault in the thesis of biopolitics came to argue that it is as 'managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race' that modern political regimes have been able to wage so many wars in defence of the biological heritage and the species life. The counter-state strategic discourse, in which Foucault situated his own project at the outset of the lecture series, must in other words also be held accountable for the emergence of biopolitical war.

Recognising how the counter-state strategic discourse on war has in fact been constitutive of those very power relations Foucault sought to dismantle, Foucault's project is cast into crisis. In fact, Foucault seems to abandon us on the question of how to think beyond the ontology of politics as the continuation of war, which, despite of the potential for desubjugation, is the very principle that allows biopolitical regimes the practice of racial techniques with which life is rendered governable and put to use in the waging of war as well as in the economic circulation of forces extracted from subjects. The project of finding a way out of the ontological account of politics, war and life in biopolitics is then seemingly abandoned in favour of the study of modes of subjectivation in Greco-Roman Antiquity. The period from 1976 to 1984 that separates, on the one hand, Foucault's work on biopolitics in *The Will to Knowledge* and *Society Must be Defended* and, on the other, the inquiry into the government of self in *The Use of Pleasure*, in other words seems to mark a reorientation of the intellectual itinerary pursued by Foucault. With the simultaneous publication in 1984 of *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, the eight-year silence of Foucault is

broken with the announcement of the inquiry into the problematisation of the subject in Antiquity.

The problem of political modernity is to be approached from different pathways than the one that put Foucault's own project on the track of modern counter-state discourse. The problematic of biopolitics, however, is not entirely abandoned. In 1980 Foucault delivered a course at Collège de France *On the Government of the Living*. While the course seems to constitute a first reorientation of his work, it follows on the lectures series from 1978-1979 *The Birth of Biopolitics*. In the 1980 course, we find Foucault inquiring into the Christian ritual of confession and the procedures that tie a subject to a truth internalised as the form of subjectivity by means of which he can be governed. What interests Foucault is the genealogy of the techniques with which the modern state assumes the role of managing life and survival by integrating objectifying procedures of the care of the natural life of population with processes by which the individual comes to bind himself to an identity and a consciousness of his own and, at the same time, to an external power.

However, in the texts of Cassian, in which these monastic practices of spiritual direction that constitute the relationship of command and obedience between the tyrannical spiritual director and the subject being directed by command, as he would be by the Word of God, Foucault encounters an unexpected point of articulation of resistance. In these texts, Foucault discovers a counter-discourse as emergent in the techniques of existence of late Antiquity. In Marcus, Seneca, and Aurelius Foucault discovers a most different mode of relationship that ties the subject not to an external truth, as in Christianity, but rather to itself in the sense of practices of self that pertain to an irreducible choice of existence. It would be under this theme of Greco-Roman techniques of existence and the government of self that Foucault would offer a strong counterpoint to the totalising aspirations of modern biopolitical regimes. The trajectory of thought delineated in Foucault's inquiry into monastic practices in which the subject comes to bind himself to the command of the spiritual doctor is moved to the background. However, in view of the stated intention of the present study, as a pursuit of Foucault's reflection on the problem of war and biopolitical modernity, one is led to investigate the governmental practices

emergent in the relationship of command. As stated, this requires a return to the Greeks.

In his famous work, *Homo Sacer – Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Giorgio Agamben has attempted an inquiry into the relationship between the political model of the Greeks and biopolitical modernity. Contrary to the analysis we find in Foucault, Agamben argues that the conditions of possibility of the biopolitical articulation of life must precisely be located as an emergence that can be traced to the classical heritage, in particular, to Aristotle. According to Agamben, one must recognise the idea of political life and the end of the *polis*, emergent from the inclusion of ‘simple natural life’ [zēn] in the political realm, as consubstantial with biopolitics: “Placing biological life at the centre of its calculations, the modern State therefore does nothing other than bring to light the secret tie uniting power and bare life.” (Agamben 1998: 6). Referring to the distinction in Aristotle between ‘simple natural life’ [zēn] of the animal and the ‘politically qualified life’ [eu zēn] of man, Agamben then calls for a revision of the Foucaultian thesis of biopolitics on the grounds of an inquiry into the Aristotelian sense of man’s capacity for a political existence: “In Foucault’s statement according to which man was, for Aristotle, a ‘living animal with the additional capacity for political existence,’ it is therefore precisely the meaning of this ‘additional capacity’ that must be understood as problematic.” (Ibid. 7).

As I will explain in chapter four, while offering important insights into the principle of sovereignty, Agamben’s thesis of biopolitics cannot be sustained in view of how Foucault thought about biopolitics let alone how Foucault conceived of the classical heritage. However, in his attempt at tracing an itinerary from the classical articulation of being political to biopolitics, Agamben seems to have pointed to an important perspective that appears to have been left unexplored by Foucault. While, in Foucault, the sense of being political in Aristotle is the very antithesis of biopolitics, in view of the ontology of operativity and command delineated in the present study the hypothesis that there might exist a certain relation among these most different forms of political being cannot be dismissed, but must be further studied. Interestingly, while arguing that Aristotle’s definition of man marks the originary site of the biopolitical reference to life, an inquiry into the actual content of the

Aristotelian idea of man as a *politikon zōon* remains absent in the study of Agamben. This is all the more surprising since the problematisation of this idea is what forms gist of his argument. In an equally striking fashion, rather than inquiring into the actual practices that informed the classical sense of being political, Agamben, drawing on the work of Walter Benjamin, concerns himself almost exclusively with an extensive analysis of the logic of sovereignty and the juridical model of power claiming the juridico-institutional model and the biopolitical model of power to be congenial, that, in fact, the two models intersect in the *exceptio* as the logic that unites power and bare life.

In any case, if we are to inquire further into the hypothesis of a certain relationship between the classical heritage and biopolitics, we must first take up Foucault's suggestion to try to think beyond the biopolitical ontology of war and the subject. Such an inquiry, however, requires that we first provide an examination of the Foucaultian thesis of biopolitics. In this reading I will propose that the fact that Foucault seems to have dismissed any relation between the ancients and biopolitical modernity, in fact even opposing biopolitics to Aristotle's definition of man, has its logical grounds in the problem Foucault encountered when, in *Society Must be Defended*, he attempted at a reading of power and politics in terms of war. Specifically, in situating his own genealogical method within the counter-state strategic discourse at the site of an inversion Clausewitz's proposition on war and politics, Foucault came to situate his project precisely at the site of the ontology of operativity and command, as delineated in the present thesis. The proposition in Clausewitz, often referred to as the concept of war – a proposition Foucault does not question, but rather inverts – in fact has its conditions of possibility precisely in the idea of steering war once discovered by the Greeks that since formed the terrain for the investment of war in the relations of forces through the ontology of operativity and command. In turn, if this is so then this may explain how, other than the obvious and vast differences between the government of self in classical political culture and the government of life in modern politics, Foucault seems to have made no connections between his inquiry into classical Greek Antiquity, which nonetheless uncovered the congeniality of the ruling principle

and the government of self, and his study of biopolitics. At this point, then, we must attend to a reading of the thesis of biopolitics.

Turning the attention from the study of disciplinary power in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shift focus in *The Will to Knowledge* to pursue a line of thought on the emergence of a form of power concerned with exerting a positive influence over life, a power that seeks the promotion of life and assumes the role of managing and developing the forces of the social body, 'making them grow'. Immediately, Foucault encounters the enigma that seems to haunt political modernity. Namely, how is it that modern liberal regimes organised around the idea of the promotion of life and peaceful civil societies have in fact engendered the most bestial practices of war ever known to Western history? According to Foucault, one must pay attention here to the shift in the orientation of power from the old sovereign principle that asserts the right of death to an exertion of control over life. As Foucault explains:

Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital. It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men to be killed. (Foucault 1998: 137)

One must pay attention here to the distinction Foucault makes in terms of how sovereign power relates to biopolitical power. The argument in Foucault is not that the reorientation of power entails that the old sovereign power and the right to kill disappears with the emergence of biopolitics and the idea of managing life and survival. On the contrary, Foucault finds that a kind of parallel shift occurs in the role of the right to kill in the functioning of power that resituates the axis on which power refers to life. This resituation, Foucault explains, has to do with the discovery of a form of political subject unknown to the old form of sovereign power, that is, the subject of population, and how power then begins to function by means of 'double bind' tying together

disciplinary techniques targeting the individual with the regulatory controls of population:

Power over life evolved in two basic forms; these forms were not antithetical, however; they constituted rather two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations. One of these poles – the first to be formed, it seems – centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration in efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the *disciplines*: an *anatomo-politics of the human body*. The second... focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity... Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls*: a *biopolitics of the population*. (Ibid. 139).

In assuming power over life, biopolitics produces a kind of bifurcation within the social fabric of society with important consequences for the problem of war. Through the deployment of disciplinary techniques, biopolitical regimes acquire new means of control over the individual body. The 'docile' body subjected to discipline provides them with the ability to secure an absence of war within the state called civil society. However, through the deployment of regulatory controls, targeting the assemblage of bodies of populations, biopolitical regimes simultaneously create the conditions of possibility for a new assemblage of forces to be mobilised in war. This is how we can now revisit the passage in which Foucault mentions the shift in the orientation of power to explain how war at the threshold of biopolitical modernity comes to appear in its most atrocious form:

[T]he existence in question is no longer the juridical existence of sovereignty; at stake is the biological existence of a population. If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers, this is not because of a return of the ancient right to kill; it is

because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population. (Ibid 137).

The distinction Foucault makes here is that, in the old form of sovereignty as it appears in medieval society, war functioned as a means of settling disputes between princes or kings. The relationship of the king to the subject was a fundamentally asymmetrical relation in which the sovereign could 'take life and let live' if the subject opposed him. Moreover, the sovereign had the negative right of seizure of the subject's body to mobilise the subject in the defence of the sovereign. In biopolitics, however, the subject who must be defended is no longer the sovereign in the real physical sense of the king's body, whose life and death would demarcate the boundary of war. When power is exercised at the level of the life of populations, the old boundary of sovereignty is transgressed, as war becomes a matter of the struggle for existence of the life of population.

Since war now concerns the existence and well being of the population, war is untied from the confinement to the old sovereign right of seizure. In effect, the activity of war comes to be seen, not as a necessary evil one must carry out in the defence of the sovereign, but rather as a positive, life-affirming act. It is on this terrain of the practice of war as a life-affirming act that we encounter the so-called 'enigmas' modernity has proposed to historical reason, beginning with the Napoleonic Wars and reaching its cataclysmic highpoint with the 'atomic situation' of the Cold War. As the state assumes the role of managing life and survival, pace Foucault, war transgresses the old boundaries and, overflowing outside them, begins to coincide with the normal order as a condition of possibility for existence of the population and the species life. What is at stake is no longer the defence of the medieval sovereign, nor is it the kind of private war that preceded it, as in Plato or Aristotle, in which man once found a capacity for a government of self as the conditions of possibility of political life. What is at stake is a politics of life, in which war and the problem of government will be seen not as a private matter, but as a matter of state and the subject of population implying a complete reversal of the classical political model:

For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question (Foucault 1998: 143).

In his politics of managing life, says Foucault, modern man displaces the very sense and mode of being political that once allowed Aristotle to discover his *politikon zōon* in the great chain of beings wherein man for a long time dwelled among all the other gregarious animals.

And yet, can we say beyond the shadow of doubt that there is in fact no relation to be found between the conditions of possibility of the biopolitical mobilisation of populations for war and the logic of operativity and command emergent in the military practices of the army in classical Greece, in which the subject as *stratiōtēs* [a citizen bound to military service], in his government of self, simultaneously came to bind himself to the command of the *stratēgos* [general]? Indeed, is it not possible in fact to establish a line of flight that connects disciplinary power, sovereignty and biopolitics horizontally through the apparatus we refer to with the concept of war, that is, the pertinacious ideas that war can be steered and that subjectivity is the command of the other, that is, the twin-ideas emergent from the notion of the perpetual war that must be suspended, but remains contained in virtuality in both the subject and the state; in short, the ontology of operativity and command? Writing in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault in fact seems to have made an affirmative suggestion in reflecting upon the proposition in Clausewitz on war and politics, a proposition he would since pursue albeit differently in both *Society Must be Defended* and *The Will to Knowledge*. “It may be”, Foucault contends while inverting Clausewitz,

that war as strategy is a continuation of politics. But it must not be forgotten that ‘politics’ has been conceived as a continuation, if not exactly and directly of war, at least of the military model as a fundamental means of preventing civil disorder. (Foucault 1991: 168).

What is at issue for Foucault, then, is not so much a discussion of the concept of war as the possibility of its inversion, but nor is it his stated intention. What interests Foucault is how an understanding of the model of military organisation could inform of the tactics by which societies came to assume a certain order by means of war. In any case, in *The Will to Knowledge* Foucault revisits the observation first presented in *Discipline and Punish*. Here, however, he reformulates the observation in the form of a question:

[S]hould we turn the expression around, then, and say that politics is war pursued by other means? If we still wish to maintain a separation between war and politics, perhaps we should postulate rather that this multiplicity of force relations can be coded – in part but never totally – either in the form of ‘war’, or in the form of ‘politics’; this would imply two different strategies (but the one always liable to switch into the other) for integrating these unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable and tense force relations. (Foucault 1998: 93).

Again, Foucault does not question the intrinsic logic of the concept of war. Rather, he turns his attention to how war (that is, the concept of war) is invested by means of a certain ‘strategic model’ in providing an explanation of how “one of the essential traits of Western societies is that the force relationships which for a long time had found expression in war, in every form of warfare, gradually became invested in the order of political power.” (Ibid. 102). Here we can see the difference between the observation in *Discipline and Punish*, which concerns how tactical models emergent from the military organisation for war came to be invested indirectly in the relations of force, as a kind of Hobbessian schema of peace and order projected over the multitude of disordered subjects. By contrast, in elaborating the thesis of biopolitics in *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault contends that war (again the concept of war) invests the order of political power immanently. The functioning of war, in which we may now read the ontology of command and operativity, cannot be reduced to the indirect and discrete influence of the military institution. On the contrary, war must be recognised in terms of the “... multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation” (Ibid. 92).

War, in other words, must be understood as a source that engenders particular forms of force relations that are constitutive of power relations. In biopolitics, Foucault explains, war becomes the source that accounts for the forms of life that engender and sustain power relations. No doubt a most disquieting diagnosis, biopolitics in other words not only discretely engenders the functioning of tactics in the individuation of bodies via discipline or the operation of strategies in the constitution of populations biopolitically: "Rather, one must conceive of the double conditioning of a strategy by the specificity of possible tactics, and of tactics by the strategic envelope that makes them work" (Ibid. 100). In turn, biopolitics not only seeks out peace in the deployment of tactical schemas over societies, biopolitical regimes employ exactly the same principles of power over life to carry out strategies for the mass mobilisations of societies in war. But here again we are abandoned on the logic of the concept of war to inform of the nature is this relationship in which war seems to imbue life with certain tactical and strategical aspirations.

However, in view of the argument to be put forward for reflection in this dissertation, we could say that it may well be that biopolitics affords modern regimes a new assemblage of forces to be deployed in a struggle for existence while simultaneously permeating the very capillaries of societal peace, but one must not forget that this would not be possible without either the war or the subject once discovered with the political idea of steering war as a means of rendering life governable. In other words, it remains a blind spot in the analysis of Foucault how, in the first place, it became possible for the subject to submit to the military tactics in the individuation of bodies via discipline, which then would be reinvested in the strategies in which the individuals are mobilised as populations for war. In fact, this may be how Foucault, inverting Clausewitz in *Society Must be Defended*, came to situate his project exactly at the site where the concept of war and the ontology of operativity and command incessantly renew one another. Inversion or no inversion, it comes down to the same war once discovered by man as he crossed the threshold of metaphysics to assume the task of steering war. In short, what remains to be interrogated in the Foucaultian thesis of biopolitics is the connection between war and the

practices that tie the subject to a certain truth internalised as the form of subjectivity by means of which he can be governed.

Now I have used the term 'ontology of operativity and command' throughout these pages without referring it to its author proper. The term is coined by Agamben in his archaeology of duty, *Opus Die*, but here employed differently. In his inquiry, Agamben traces the idea of being as effectiveness, a theme which however is clearly related if not congenial to the teleology of steering through virtue. In an acutely more archaeologically sensitive analysis than that of the author of *Homo Sacer*, Agamben, taking his cue from the Aristotelian distinction between *dynamis* and *energeia*, argues that this division of being inscribes the primacy of *energeia* over *dynamis* thus informing of an orientation of being toward operativity. I will not try to do justice to the excellent analysis developed in *Opus Die*, but simply note that the present analysis cites with the Agamben of *Opus Dei* to explore the possibility, as stated at the end of his inquiry, of thinking beyond the ontology of operativity and command. Like Foucault, however, Agamben curiously never dwells on the exemplary place of this account of being in the military organisation. However, if we are to understand how it once became possible for being to enter into the site of indistinction to effectiveness, then we must turn the attention to the terrain of *polemos*. Taking up Foucault's suggestion stated at the beginning of this chapter, I will study when and why it was first noticed or imagined that what is going on beneath and in power relations is a war; that is, how and why someone came up with the idea that a sort of uninterrupted battle shapes peace.

§ 2 *Philopolemos* – The Friendship of War

With these words he called out to the Trojans in a loud voice: ‘Trojans, Lycians and you Dardanians that like your fighting hand to hand, be men, my comrades, and call up that fighting spirit of yours! I am going to put on the armour of matchless Achilles, the fine armour I took from mighty Patroclus when I killed him.’ With these words Hector of the flashing helmet left the battlefield... Then he changed his arms, standing far from the battlefield with all its tears, telling his war-loving Trojans to take his own arms to sacred Ilium and putting on the imperishable armour of Achilles, which the Sky-gods had given to his father Peleus... The armour fitted Hector’s body well, the savage spirit of the terrible War-god now entered him and power and fresh vigour filled his limbs. Uttering his piercing war-cry, he went in search of his renowned allies and presented himself before all of them, resplendent in the armour of great-hearted Achilles. To rouse their spirits he went up and spoke to each of them in turn: to Mesthles and Glaucus; to Medon and Thersilochus; to Asteropaeus, Deisenor and Hippothous; to Phorcys and Chromis and Ennomus the prophet... The Trojans advanced in a mass, and Hector led them. As a great wave roars against the current flowing out of the mouth of a sky-fed river, and the seashore’s headlands on either side boom thunderously as the sea washes back – with such a roar did the Trojans advance. (Iliad XVII: 184-196; 210-219; 263-267).

2.1. So sang the poet of Hector who was aroused by the dreadful Warlike Arēs [Arēs deinos enualios], the terrible War-god inspiring in the soul of man the divine exaltation of rage [menis] and affect [thumos] satiating the body with vigour [sthenos] – a catatonic eruption and abrupt disappearance of force [bia]. Intoxicated spirits of Arēs, the Trojan friends of war [Trōsi philoptolemoisin] charge with the force of a wave thrusting against the seashore, having been fed by Zeus the mighty Sky-god. War [polemos] is immanent man as it is immanent the *kosmos*: the spirit mirrors the sky, the rage of the fierce warm-blooded warrior [polemistēs] echoes *Aithon* [Red-fire], *Phlogeus* [Flame], *Konabos* [Tumult] and *Phobos* [Panic-fear], the fire-breathing immortal stallions driving

the chariot of Arēs. Blissfully blood thirsty, Trojan beasts of prey run about on the stage of existence, a firestorm of flashing helmets, of glittering spearheads and shining blades, of bronze shields and armours glowing in the sun.

Up until the fifth century BC, the oratory tradition guided the exegesis and interpretation of war [*polemos*].⁹ The world is folded upon signs that find their similitude in war: war speaks to man through the hymns of the poet, and the gods speak to men through war. War reveals men in their ‘unconcealment’ [*alētheia*], and things reveal themselves to man in the form of war, as oppositions of contraries forming relationships of conflict and tension. All things find their resemblance in *polemos* constituting relationships of opposites; day and night resemble male and female, famine and plenty. War is a sign of similitude, which is doubled and multiplied in an infinite series of relationships of tension: so the Oracle of Delphi does not speak, but relies on signs that juxtaposes opposites,¹⁰ and so truth [*alētheia*] enunciates itself through signs [*tekmērion*]¹¹ that, by the perpetual motion of being pulled together and drawn apart by war constitute a vibrant harmony of opposites, and by this juxtaposition of opposites the *kosmos* is linked together in a chain of resemblances.¹² War appears in the vibrating tension of the seven-stringed lyre that when played emits the sound of the *kosmos*,¹³ the *kosmos* resonating in a harmony of tension, an invisible *harmonia* like the continuous tug-of-war within the bow bent upon itself by the force of the string: “... being at variance with itself it agrees with itself, an attunement [*harmonia*] of opposite tensions, like that of the bow and lyre.”¹⁴ The sign, in itself a conjunction of opposites, always appears in the relationship of *polemos*. The sign bares the markings of war; it

⁹ See Nietzsche in *Homer and Classical Philology* (2006: 1).

¹⁰ According to Heraclitus’ fragment 93: “The Lord who owns the oracle at Delphi neither speaks nor hides his meaning but indicates it by a sign”.

¹¹ In some cases, the Greeks distinguished between *sēmeion* and *tekmērion* as in Euripides’ *Electra* (511-580), where *sēmeion* could be arbitrary in contrast to *tekmērion*, which signifies a sign of greater certainty.

¹² The metopes that decorated the walls of the early Greek temple depict the cosmos in terms of a series of polarities analogous to each other; Heracles battling Geryon, Theseus fighting Sciron etc. (DuBois 1999: 89).

¹³ According to Hippolytus: “In this way Pythagoras showed the monad to be god, and having made profound study of the nature of number he asserted the cosmos sings and is harmoniously constructed, and he was the first to reduce the motion of the seven planets to rhythm and melody”. (Refutatio I: 2.2).

¹⁴ Heraclitus fr. 51.

cannot escape war. The *kosmos* and all things united in their hidden *harmonia* of conflict are steered [kubernaō]¹⁵ by *polemos*. War functions: without *polemos* the *kosmos* would disintegrate and perish, for without the harmony of conflict the bow is unstrung, the strings of the lyre numb and the perpetual movement of the seven planets ceased.

In Archaic Greece and for most of the classical period, listening to the Homeric hymns of heroes, their deeds and acts, still invokes in the souls of men the intimate sense of resemblance that binds man to *kosmos* and with it love and happiness to war. The adjective *philopolemos* [lover of or friend of war] occurs most frequently in Homer and is sometimes used interchangeably with *arēios* [the adjective form of *Arēs*, god of war] and *arētē* [excellence, honour],¹⁶ expressing the highest praise in Homer placing the strife of the warrior [polemistēs] among the deeds and acts of gods. The archaic sense of being *philopolemos* is very difficult to render accurately, since nothing either in our experience or language quite recalls this mode of being. It is so far removed from the mode of self-relationship that would come to guide modern man who has his desires and his pleasures. Being *philopolemos* is beyond what psychoanalysis with Lacan would discover under the theme of *jouissance* and the crude mechanics of the pleasure principle.¹⁷ It applies to different coordinates of time, a different order of temporality, than what pertains to the modern experience of feeble emotions wherein one could find pleasure in pain. In the attempt of approaching an experience that may remain closed off to us, we could draw a very vague sketch and say that, in the friendship with war, it is not man that has desires or passions, but rather the passions that have man. It is the overwhelming sway, which, as it enters into openness, appears as a sign written on the body of the singular *polemistēs* [warrior]. It is the fleeting moment of the vigorous display of *bia* [force] and *kratos* [power]; an instant act of becoming that realises all potentialities of man, which then withdraws and

¹⁵ Both the verbs *kubernaō* and *oiakizō* meaning ‘to steer’ frequently appear in fifth century texts, for example, in Diogenes Apollonia’s fr. 5 and in Heraclitus’ fr. 41.

¹⁶ Homer often uses the adjective *arētē* to describe the male *hērōs* or *polemistēs*, however, *arētē* also occurs in the context of female figures such as Penelope in which case it takes on a broader sense of excellence in terms of using all faculties to their greatest potential; strength, courage, wit, and deceptiveness.

¹⁷ See Lacan (2008: 235-68).

falls back into the world. It is the profound sensation of vigour, happiness, and bliss [makaria], which is felt under the dark horizon of combat [makhē]. When, in several passages of the hymns, Homer verses on either the Achaeans or the Trojans in terms of having *arētē* or being *philopolemos*, he adheres to a mode of being in which the divine propinquity of love [philo], rage [menis], and spiritedness [thumos] find their attunement [harmonia] in the steering by *polemos* of *kosmos*; it is the site where life most intense, most honourable, most divine, and most worthy of praise – the life of the *hērōs* – shines in the abrupt emptiness of death. To the Archaic Greeks, life or being [phusis] is precisely also not to be [existasthai] (Heidegger 2000: 67), since *phusis* expresses the relationship of opposites found in *polemos*. The friendship with war, then, is also the absolute proximity of *phusis* to *existasthai*. This is how Achilles, best among the Achaeans, not only resembles the Olympian gods in his deeds and acts, but also in the sense that he, as *hērōs*, traverses a realm beyond mere men, the realm of the demi-gods to whom the friendship with war is always bought at the loss of life. Death meets the *hērōs* early. This too belongs to the sense and mode of being *philopolemos*.

However, this is not to say that *tragodia* [tragedy] accompanies the friendship with war in the Greek oratory tradition. Unlike the *hērōs* of the classical world, in whom the friendship with war would be caught in the endless cycle of *hubris-atē-hamartia-nemesis* [hubris-seduction-misjudgement-nemesis] and put on display at the Athenian theatre of Dionysus in its profoundly archaic stature, the Homeric *polemistēs* moves within a world where act [agein] and becoming still have a positive relation to rage [menis] and spiritedness [thumos]. In a world steered by *polemos*, *menis* is like the upsurge of fire [pur] of which the world is made,¹⁸ the tense force relations that by their conjunction [logos] ignite and explode lighting up the theatre of being [phusis]; it is like a storm or a wave that carries the *polemistēs* and *hērōs* in his deeds and acts, a force that fills his limbs with vigour as the vehicle of divine creation and destruction. To the archaic warrior, *menis* is what a first principle would become to the classical philosopher. It is like a substance out which the world is made and set in motion, the world equalling the sum of an infinite number of

¹⁸ Heraclitus fr. 30.

battles going on within it. Rage resembles the ever-living fire of *kosmos*, because it is similar to the fire that originates movement in all things. Rage flares up in the *hērōs* and carves out an opening – a *clearing* – into what would otherwise always be re-absorbed by the invisible *harmonia* of conflict, the constancy of life [zoē] limited by the struggle of nature [phusis] that lends it a kind of thickness. This is to say that in a world steered by *polemos*, *menis* and *thumos* make action [agein] possible, but not in the sense of the conscientious mind acting in the world. Rather, they animate the ever-living fire found in the steering of *kosmos* by *polemos*, which brings into presence these tense force relations in the deeds and acts of the *hērōs*. Without *menis* and *thumos*, the *hērōs* would not be able to perform his role in the great cosmic spectacle of the theatre of being.

In fact, he could no longer be what the Greeks referred to as *agōnistēs*, which is what we recognise as the substantive form of *agōnia* [struggle between equals or resemblances] although no such clear grammatical distinction existed at this point in time. *Agōnistēs* is a predication that refers to a condition of being [phusis] rather than the identity of a subject. This is attested to also in how the Greeks conceived of the event of action grammatically. *Agōnistēs* is the same word we find in what we see as the form of an adverb, *agein*, a word that could take on a variety of meanings, but is often translated as to lead, to guide, to set in motion, and to carry off. Here, however, we cannot follow the later grammarians, since what we would understand as the fundamental relationship between noun and verb has not been worked out at this point in time. What was understood by *agein* was not the logic ascribed to action in syntax, as in the event of man acting in the world. This would not be done, and only so in a rather rudimentary manner, before Plato (Heidegger 2000: 60-61). In the archaic world, action is disclosed in being as the emergent sway of the conjunction of opposites; *agōnia* is *phusis* engendered by the forces of *menis* and *thumos* so as to constitute what we would see as action. But as the wide semantic fields of the words *agein* and *agōnia* also attest to, action is not what emerged from the site of the mind (Snell 1982: 31). It is rather the effect of certain forces, which are channelled through the divine passages of *menis* and *thumos* that in Homer bind man to the will of gods and, in Heraclitus, to the *Logos* of *polemos*.

This is also how the deed of the *hērōs*, as he triumphantly raises his sword over the dead body of his opponent, is not considered by the *hērōs* as the effect of his own decision. Rather, he senses that certain forces, which are never in his possession and which have no origin in him, shape his course. As such his actions merely express continuity with the world. Moreover, they do not establish any permanent difference out of what is essentially life at level with the world. Difference certainly emerges out of the relationship of opposites found in the agonistic struggle to the death between *hērōs* and *hērōs*, but always in a provisional way. “War is father of all and king of all”, which is how war, Heraclitus says in fragment 53, reveals some men as gods, others as men, some he makes slaves, others free. *Polemos* gives birth to the difference between god and man, the slave and the free, but there is no finality at stake here. *Polemos* does not disclose god and man in the shadowless night of the final battle, the kind of ideal war the philosophers and jurists in time would come to dream about. *Polemos* continuously engenders new relationships of forces, because it is in itself similar to the infinite relativity of difference, which originates movement in all things and what the Greeks saw as the steering of the *kosmos*. Inequalities and divisions appear, but always in a transitory manner; in war, the *hērōs* dies, new gods appear, and the slave becomes the master of the free man.

This is also to say, then, that *polemos* cannot be ascribed to any being or referred to any unique source of sovereignty from where power would emanate and descend upon man. *Polemos* cannot be acquired, seized, or shared, and it is not a certain force that appears exclusively in the *hērōs*. Do we need to say that *polemos* is everywhere, and thus anticipate what power would achieve when Foucault ‘calligraphied’ the social sciences? Continuing this line of thought, the sign *hērōs* does not refer to the privileged place of power embodied in man, but rather to a state of potentiality that turns into actuality as rage flashes up in the steering of the *polemistēs* by *polemos*. Like the animal that brings down its rival, the *hērōs* who slays his opponent has simply found himself in a particular set of circumstances, and as such is nothing more than the actualisation of certain potentialities, the bare manifestation of the *Logos* according to which all things

come to pass.¹⁹ However, unlike the animal whose apathetic gaze after mortal combat expresses the mere monarchy of nature, the *hērōs* knows the gods were in his favour and his rage and savagery the manifestation of a divine inspiration born out of the *harmonia* of *kosmos*. The *hērōs* slays his opponent, not because he is compelled to do so by any mortal being or because of a conscientious mind that calls upon him to act, but because the dreadful Warlike Arēs has entered his spirit. Sloterdijk captures this most accurately, as he explains how the early Greek *hērōs* must be understood as ‘a vessel for the abrupt flow of energy from the gods’ (2010: 8). This is precisely how we must understand *agein* as it appears in the figure of the Archaic Greek *hērōs*. In this world, there are no subjects who act on objects. On the contrary, *agein*, in the sense of *agōnia*, is the flow of rage and spiritedness that gathers in the *hērōs* who conducts these forces in the intense mediation between immortals and mortals. In a world without rage and spiritedness, man, along with the gods, would regress and disappear into the senseless emptiness of an eternal silence with no steering [kubernāō] or meaning, that is, if we are to apply a more familiar term to what the Greeks thought of in terms of gathering [logos] as truth [alētheia].

Now, this immediate proximity to the divine in the cosmic event of *agōnia* is also what makes this a happening worthy of song and praise by the poet in whom it becomes deed and act. The rage and fury of the *hērōs* read as signs marked by the gods, and the poet is he who will gather these signs and let them enter into openness. The poet is he who, in listening to the *Logos* of *polemos*²⁰ catches that ‘other language’, without words or discourse, the language in which the gods speak to man through the signs that bare the markings of war. As the *agōnia* of the *hērōs* enters into language and becomes deed and act, man encounters the illuminated glow of the *hērōs*, as he sets forth into the unsaid, breaks into the unthought, compels what has never happened, and makes appear what was unseen. The poet opens his mouth to let the signs speak their similitude and let the language be known in which love, rage, and happiness glitter in the universal resemblance with war. But with the poet’s song, the Greeks also discovered what seems to pertain to every deed and act whether

¹⁹ “... all things come to pass in accordance with this *Logos*...” (Heraclitus fr. 1).

²⁰ “Listen not to me but to the *Logos*...” (Heraclitus fr. 50).

accompanied by poets, philosophers, or statesmen. As Heidegger explains, the Greeks would discover the dangerous forces of the *deinon*, the uncanny ambiguity that traverses the opposed confrontations of *polemos*: “The *deinon* is the terrible in the sense of the overwhelming sway, which induces panic-fear, true anxiety, as well as collected, inwardly reverberating, reticent awe” (Heidegger 2000: 114-15). This too belongs to the poet’s song or, more precisely, the poet’s song belongs to it, to the terrible and the dreadful. The poet sings of the fury that sparks across the *kosmos* as the terrible War-god [Arēs deinos enualios] rides his chariot pulled by the fire-breathing immortal stallions. The poet makes known how man, under the influence of Arēs, becomes *to dainotaton* knowing “... no kindness and conciliation (in the ordinary sense), no appeasement and mollification by success or prestige and by their confirmation...” (Ibid. 125).

At the same time, the poet’s song is itself the very workings of the *deinon*²¹ since there is no separation between *agōnia* and the poet who recounts the event. Just as there is no subject at stake in the Homeric *hērōs* and *polemistēs*, the *poiitis* [poet] simply considers his spirit to be a medium of the awe-inspiring forces of *kosmos*, which he can never master, but only convey. In fact, this is how the *Iliad*, as a text, is written in the codes of rage. For the hero and the poet who recounts his deeds and acts, the dreadful and the terrible are the deepest and broadest affirmation of the overwhelming sway of *polemos*. In time, tragedy will want the arrest of the hero and his friendship with war, but in the period of archaic Greece knowledge supports a world without any boundaries, but *polemos*. It supports the knowledge of *polemos*, because it runs with the grain of rage, suffering, and happiness. Like the sign life shares its name – *bios* – with that of the bow whose work is death,²² so the terrible expresses the divinity of *polemos* in which life cannot be known but in conjunction with death. This is also to say that, at this point in time, the knowledge of war does not include any notion of the consequences of failing to recognise war on the side of violence. As

²¹ Heidegger uses the term *deinon* in an ontological sense of artistic creation through destruction, which entails a form of being that stands at all times in a position of daring, a form of being through creation that knows no appeasement. I will be referring to it in the historically contingent sense, as it occurs in discourse.

²² “The bow’s name is life [bios], though its work is death.” (Heraclitus fr. 48).

long as the subject remains absent in the world of beings, violence does not appear in the vocabulary of the ancients, simply because the sublime and terrible forces of war are never recognised as the effect of decisions made by man.

When the Goddess sings of the rage of the son of Peleus, it is therefore not so much a plea for man to curb, attenuate, or rule over his passions as it is a matter of making the order of things be known, to let the divinity of rage be known; to let the signs of *polemos* be heard in their attunement to voice. In this sense, the song of the Goddess is nothing more than an account of the steering of being and *kosmos*, as engendered by man's friendship with *polemos*. The positive ground of knowledge, rage and spiritedness function as primary sources of both deed and suffering by whose kinship with war knowledge is recounted and disseminated. In fact, this is also how the story we find in the Goddess' song becomes possible. I say story because it is not an actual discourse, at least in the modern sense. It is a tale and one that speaks in crude resemblances and odd similes. It is not an erudite account, then, if we by erudition mean a certain form of scholarly rigorousness and the application of scientific method. Nor does it seem to pay attention to detail or accuracy, and it appears to have no account of time and space. From our perspective, the *poiitis*, who as *logographos* [storyteller] recounts the *Logos*, appears to be situated in a kind of permanent suspension from where he delivers his message, fatally and solemnly, like a plea that cannot be refuted. But this account [logos] is of the same order of reality as the *Logos* it recounts. The poet's song gathers in the spirit of man like a gift that cannot be refused; a gift in the sense that the message of the poet's song is already predicated by language. In fact, so much so that the message his song recounts, the order it depicts, and its fabrication into signs are so similar that they are captured by the same word; *logos*.²³

What is this *logos* [story] saying then? Well, obviously there is the account of Paris running off with Helen, which sets the relations of forces in motion by setting off rage. The infuriated Menelaus and the Achaeans find themselves in

²³As Guthrie shows, in the archaic period, and for much of the classical, the word *logos* had a wide semantic field and could attain a variety of meanings denoting anything said, a story or narrative, an account or explanation, a speech, an opinion, worth or esteem, rumour, report and several more meanings (Guthrie 2003: 420-424).

the condition of *agōnia* with Troy compelled to win back Helen. And so, the Trojan War begins with the apparent theft of a woman, a theme which actually also figures in other Greek sources.²⁴ After ten years and the deaths of many heroes on both sides, including Achilles and Ajax, Hector and Paris, the city falls to the ploy of the cunning Achaeans, the infamous Trojan Horse. Having held out the Achaean siege for ten years, in the end, the Trojans who, albeit by the intervention of the gods, brought the war upon themselves by ‘carrying off a woman’ are unable to escape a miserable death, as war is decided not so much by force, but out of accident, deceit, and misjudgement. But there is another *logos* to be found in the poet’s song, one that is also recounted under the theme of ‘women-stealing’. As we know, much of the *Iliad* revolves around the efforts of bringing Achilles back into the fight after Agamemnon, *basileus* [king] and *arkhōn* [leader], has laid claim to the fair-cheeked Briseis (whose name literally means the ‘tight-belted’), although she had been awarded Achilles as his war-prize. Achilles then refuses to fight for the Achaeans. In fact, he turns against the Achaeans unleashing rage and fury on his own folk sparing no soul. Perching in his tent and bristling with anger, he remains outside of the battlefield to the detriment of the Achaean forces until Hector by mistake kills Patroclus, the dear friend of Achilles. Achilles now takes his arms, has another armour crafted by the forces of the underworld, and is carried off to combat, not by the command of any king or leader, but by the raging forces of *polemos* according to which kinship everyone who is a true *philopolemos* must to return a ‘favour’ [*charis*] to a fellow *polemistēs*.²⁵

²⁴ At the beginning of his *Histories* (1.4), Herodotus discusses the theme of ‘carrying women off’ [*harpazein gunaikas*] tracing the origin of hostilities between the Greeks and the Persians to the robbery [*harpagas*] of a certain Lacedaemonian woman. The Phoenicians stole Io, the Greeks carried off Europa, then Medea, and Paris ran off with Helen, Herodotus explains and continues: “So far it was a matter of mere robbery on both sides. But after this (the Persians say), the Greeks were very much to blame; for they invaded Asia before the Persians attacked Europe. ‘We think,’ they say, ‘that it is unjust to carry women off. But to be anxious to avenge rape is foolish: wise men take no notice of such things. For plainly the women would never have been carried away, had they not wanted it themselves. We of Asia did not deign to notice the robbery of our women; but the Greeks, for the sake of a Lacedaemonian woman, recruited a great armada, came to Asia, and destroyed the power of Priam. Ever since then we have regarded Greeks as our enemies’.”

²⁵ In Homer, to help or avenge a fellow *polemistēs* is an obligation; it is to do him a favour [*charis*] (*Iliad* I.152-60; III.95-96).

While the theme of women-stealing is certainly topologically important in the world of ancient Greece, it appears here to demonstrate a certain *logos*. It sets the scene for a chain of events to unfold from the setting-into-motion [agein] of the workings of *polemos*. I say setting-into-motion here rather than violation, because, at this point in time, tragedy has yet to recount the *logos* in terms of the codes of *nomos* [law] and justice [dikē]. Agamemnon and Achilles are neither protagonists nor antagonists of the sense of justice we find in the idea of *dikē*, which, as it appears in the classical political discourse of Plato, concerns a matter of the relationship between the ‘well-ordered’ soul and the laws of political community. However, in the archaic oratory tradition we do not find the kind of *logos*, which would be derived from the sense of justice of classical philosophy, the *logos* in which an unfortunate chain of events occurs as the effect of misguided souls. Rage and spiritedness appear, but are never made a matter that concerns the proper order of the soul. In fact, this *logos* has no need to be affirmed by recourse to the originarity of the soul, as when Plato, in book ten of the *Laws*, undertakes to dismantle the Sophistic opposition between *phusis* [nature] and *nomos* [custom]. It knows no separation between *phusis* and *nomos*, because it has no privileged origin in the soul and no originarity other than what is given by *polemos* as the disclosure of that which is [phusis]. This is how the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles, the *arkhōn* and the *hērōs*, appears as a man-to-man relation of enmity unmediated by justice in the sense of *dikē*. It is equally important to note, however, that this struggle is not the agonistic struggle among equals, as in the metope-like encounter of *hērōs* versus *hērōs* that appears between Achilles and Hector. It is rather that of enmity as antagonism [neikos] that surfaces as a disturbance of the order of things, a transgression, not in the sense of a violation that will be sanctioned by law, but rather as an event that will simply meet the course of war.

Beneath the grand tale of epic battles between gods, heroes, and kings, we find the story of a certain course of events, then, or, more accurately, a certain *logos* of war. It is a *logos* that bares witness to a condition in which the forces of war have yet to become integrated in a politico-juridical order at which point the *arkhōn* will come to occupy the privileged position of the *stratēgos* [general] who by principle rules over men by command [arkhein]. The relation between

Agamemnon and Achilles clearly shows no traces of such principle, which is how Agamemnon can only hope to influence the course of Achilles indirectly through sanctions. Moreover, his attempt of manipulating the relations of forces that govern the *hērōs* never succeeds. Deleuze and Guattari (2007: 388) have suggested that, from the point view of the sovereign, the course of Achilles seems to read as a betrayal of the politico-juridical order, the pact, and the bond. This is certainly true, though not entirely accurate. Achilles cannot betray the pact and the bond for the same reason that Agamemnon cannot succeed in his strategic attempt of manipulating the *hērōs*, the reason being that *dikē* has yet to be discovered in terms of the well-ordered soul as the principle of political order.

The absence of the classical politico-juridical idea of order is striking in the behaviour of Achilles, but actually no less so in the event where Agamemnon lays claim to the war-prize of Achilles. Agamemnon says: "... I will myself come to your tent and take the fair-cheeked Briseis, your prize, so that you will understand how much mightier I am than you, and another may shrink from declaring himself my equal and likening himself to me to my face." (Iliad I: 182-186). Here, *bia* [force] and *kratos* [power] function as claims to authority. We are in a basic relationship of dominance then rather than one where the well-ordered soul obeys and follows the command of the sovereign. Moreover, and precisely because of this, Agamemnon's claim constitutes a violation at the most fundamental level, since the one who is first by rank of king or war leader cannot claim a right to authority over the one who is *phertatos* [best, bravest] by force, honour, and excellence [*arētē*]. Conversely, what reads as the betrayal by Achilles of the bond and the pact actually reflects the fact that the *hērōs* answers to a different order of things in which the classical idea of *arkhein* is not known.²⁶ This is also how the raging forces of war of the *hērōs* appear, not as sanctioned from the outside by command. It is how, in fact, war cannot come into being by command, but simply appears. It appears because in it *polemos* agrees with itself, a *harmonia* of opposite tensions that arises as relationships of

²⁶ Here, Deleuze and Guattari come close in their reflection on ideal-typical forms of the warrior and the sovereign in Indo-European mythology, the 'war machine' and the 'state apparatus': "In every respect, the war machine is of another species, another nature, another origin than the State apparatus." (2007: 389).

power and resistance, which are given by the potentialities of rage, force, and spiritedness. We have noted that the course of the archaic *hērōs* must be read in terms of signs that bare the markings of war. *Arētē* and *arēios* [honour, excellence] are such marks that, by virtue of their immediate proximity to *Arēs*, function as inviolable sources of the order that guides the course of the *hērōs*. This is what steers the *hērōs* in the particular mode of being that belongs to the one who is *philopolemos*. In the friendship with war, the course of the *hērōs* is bound to the relationship of forces, which is *polemos*.

But what *logos*, then, is the poet trying to convey to mankind in these primordial words of the Western tradition? Well, if we look beneath the obvious and reassuring message of early Western civilisation that bad things happen if one carries off women, what is at stake in the conflict between the *arkhōn* and the *hērōs* concerns precisely the relationship between order and the friendship with war. To us the archaic idea of being *philopolemos* might seem to read as a certain affirmation of order as emergent from an immanent relationship of resistance and right. Indeed, it seems that the friendship with war expresses this certain sense of right, a right of private war, a right of resistance. The *logos* we find appears to be saying this: no matter what, war remains a private matter. It is given by man's friendship with war and no one, neither king nor war leader, would be wise in thinking that war could be steered and the *polemistēs* or *hērōs* made subject to command. Such *hubris* awakens the wrath of the gods and sets in motion an ill-fated chain of events. However, this would be to assume too much all the while that there is no moral account of things so long as the ruling principle of *arkhē* remains absent. Then the philosophers will postulate the originarity of the soul as the cipher of virtue and justice. Then these souls are supposed to have their passions and acquire a certain moral consciousness in order to master them, to rule over them.

However, in the archaic world, there is no such account of things. To understand the *logos* that appears in these early words of the Western tradition, we therefore have to abandon the safe ground of morality. In fact, the *logos* we find in the poet's song is simply the workings of the order of *polemos*. It is an account of what happens when the order of *polemos* is set into motion with the sovereign intervention of the *basileus* in the friendship with war. Specifically,

the poet recounts the course of events that follows from the attempt of the *basileus* to subvert the divine resemblance bestowed upon the *hērōs* who follows no man, acting only in accordance with the steering by *polemos* of his fleeting order of self. So, in essence, what *logos* appears in this Greek gift that cannot be refused? It seems to me that it is *harmonia* not in the classical sense of peace [eirene] as what appears at the other side of *polemos*, but in the aletheic sense of truth, the irreducible duality of struggle found in the steering of man and *kosmos* in the overwhelming sway of *polemos*.

As the hymn makes clear already in the opening verse, this would send many valiant souls into Hades (Iliad I: 1-4), but in the archaic world the poet has yet to dwell on the poor souls of the famous innocents who died at break of day, a theme which would come to figure as a central element when tragedy, in the classical period, discovers order through the violation of *nomos* [custom] and public right [dikē]. Though before that time would come, tragedy would first witness the gradual decline of the continuity between language and *polemos*. In the period of the Peloponnesian War, it would witness their vast dispersion as the old order of resemblances found in *polemos* enters into a new kinship, that of error and illusion. However, in the archaic world, man has yet to discover the transgression of law or the deceiving words that accompanies faithless gifts, such as the one the Achaeans present to the unsuspecting Trojan horse-breeders.²⁷ The great speculation about truth, order [arkhē], justice [dikē], and law [nomos], and the vast divide that would emerge out of it between the atrocities of war and the serenity of *eirene* [peace], has not begun. Language is still attuned to the Sovereignty of the Same in which *harmonia* is both war and peace.²⁸ Poetry therefore dwells on the wound of the similar. It dwells on the repeated injury that is inflicted on the body of the *hērōs* and singular *polemistēs* who derives his mode of being, his sovereignty, not from any mere mortal, but from signs that mark the resemblances of *polemos*.

²⁷ Though allegedly, Cassandra did warn against keeping the Trojan Horse according to a later anonymous source. Epitome 5.17 of the *Bibliothēkē* [library] says that Cassandra warned of an armed force inside the horse, and that Laocoon agreed.

²⁸ “*Polemos* is both war and peace [harmonia]” (Heraclitus fr. 53, 67).

2.2. At the beginning of the fourth century, war is yet represented in poetic and lyrical form, and the syntax²⁹ is still governed by signs that are brought to enunciate their meaning by linking together contraries forming relationships of tension.³⁰ However, during the fourth century the knowledge of war would gradually be relinquished from its relation to the oratory tradition in which *polemos* is celebrated as the force that preserves the *harmonia* of *kosmos* and liberates both man and lyre from numbness and impotentiality. In the classical world, the discourse on *polemos* would undergo at least three significant displacements: the first is traceable as a transformation in tragedy, the second, which is roughly contemporary to the classical tragedians, is the transition from tragedy to history [historia], and the third happens with the emergence of classical politico-philosophical discourse. This is not to say that the poetic representation ceases to exist, but rather that different knowledges begin to overlay it.³¹

In tragedy, the knowledge of war will be discovered from pathways most different from the channels of love and affect that run through the poet's mind, and by which the gods influence the soul of man through the dreadful but sacred passages of *polemos*. A concern about war creeps into the souls of men. By the time the great political treatises appear with Plato and Aristotle, the friendship with war will read as signs of a different order of reality. In fact, the archaic word *philopolemos* no longer occurs. Instead, we find the peculiar expression *polemou epithumētēs*. This expression has a distinctively different meaning that, though it is difficult to convey accurately, can be rendered as 'his desire is dominated by war' expressing a certain ill-fated state of mind [nous]. It is classical thought dispelling the chimeras of the old world, as the old kinship of man and war is problematised. Tragedy, which will discover the concern about war and sense of responsibility, stands at the intersection between the old

²⁹ See Lebow's considerations on the syntax and grammar of the oratory tradition (Lebow 2003: 72).

³⁰ In a passage of the *Eudemian Ethics*, for example, Aristotle says: "For there would be no attunement [harmonia] without high and low notes or any animals without male and female, both of which are opposites." (1235a: 25).

³¹ Clearly, the poetic representation was succeeded with the classical tragedians among whom Aeschylus seems to have carried onto the form of tragedy the relationship of opposition found in war, raising according to Aristotle in his *Poetics* (1449a) 'the number of the actors from one to two' and 'curtailing the chorus giving the dialogue the leading part'.

world that knows no sense of the mind [nous] and classical politico-philosophical thought in which the idea of the mind and the well-ordered soul provides the ordering codes of being:

[The] tragic sense of responsibility makes its appearance at the point when, in human action, a place is given to internal debate on the part of the subject [*sic*], to intention and predetermination, but when this human action still has not acquired enough consistency and autonomy to be entirely self-sufficient. The true domain of tragedy lies in that border zone where human actions are hinged together with the divine powers, where – unknown to the agent – they derive their true meaning by becoming an integral part of an order that is beyond man and that eludes him. (Vernant & Vidal-Naquet 1988: 46-47).

It is perhaps not surprising then that it is under the theme of madness and imagination that the concern about war begins to appear. In the representation of the *hērōs* in tragedy, we will find an example of how the friendship with war will come to resemble the delusional state of the disordered soul, the soul that, defeated by crude force [*bia*] and blinded by spiritedness [*thumos*], cannot seem to rule over desire [*epithumia*]. It will be under the theme of corrupted souls and delusional minds that the political ethos of the West will announce its coming and discover its calling. The great sanitation of the old order of war begins. The weapons of the warrior will become the tools of the *polis*, rage will read as signs of madness, and the spiritedness of man will be in the ever-present danger of being caught-up in the resemblances of excess and abuse; the entire economy of affect, once written in the codes of war, will be transformed into an economy of desire written in the codes of order [*arkhē*].

Deleuze and Guattari have accurately captured this shift as a displacement of the balance of power between the *hērōs* and the *basileus*: “The descendants of Hercules, Achilles, then Ajax, have enough strength to proclaim their independence from Agamemnon, a man of the old State. But they are powerless when it comes to Ulysses [Gr. Odysseus], a man of the nascent modern State, the first man of the modern State. And it is Ulysses who inherits Achilles’ arms, only to convert them to other uses, submitting them to the laws of the State – not Ajax, who is condemned by the goddess he defied and against whom he sinned.”

(Deleuze & Guattari 2007: 391-392). The reference here is of course Sophocles' *Ajax*, which is an instructive example of the displacement that occurs at the beginning of the classical age. At the onset of the play, Ajax is enraged when Agamemnon awards the imperishable armour of dead Achilles to Odysseus rather than to him. Driven by a sense of rage, which now seems to have lost continuity with the form of vigilant force and honour, and instead acquired a certain familiarity with vanity and hubris, he swears an oath to kill the *basileus* and the other Achaeans who have so disgraced him. Though before he can enact his revenge, Athena tricks him into believing that the sheep and cattle that were taken by the Achaeans as spoils of war are in fact his wrongdoers. Rage, no longer fed out of a blood-red sky, but out of a spirit of resentment reminiscent of what Nietzsche once spoke of, turns to revenge as Ajax slaughters some of them, and takes the others back to his home to torture, including a ram he believes to be his rival, Odysseus.

With Sophocles' *Ajax*, classical tragedy begins to make an endless sport of the archaic *hērōs*, because in it language breaks off its old kinship with war and enters into a new chain of resemblances from where the friendship with war will reappear in its delusional intensities. The *hērōs* becomes the disordered player of the Same and the Other. He takes things for what they are not, animals for people, and slay them in mad fury. He thinks the gods have inspired his rage, when in fact they have not only turned against him, but also led him astray with trickery and deceit. He thinks the gods will award him, when in fact he will be punished and humiliated. He is not even able to commit the atrocities of murdering the *basileus* and his allies, but is consigned by the gods to the ridiculous and disgraceful act of killing what could be children's playthings. The relationship of *bia* and *kratos* that once gathered in the *hērōs*, as primary sources of authority, is reversed, put on a pedestal and displayed as mere impotence, which is doubled and multiplied in the mirror-image of delusion and madness. At the end of the play, the figure of the *hērōs* will receive the final blow. Sophocles has Ajax relieved of his spell, but only so that he can realise his delusional ravings. From his now sanitised position of self-relationship, he can only regain honour [*arētē*] by turning against himself. Ajax commits suicide as

Sophocles has him put down like a mad dog. The circle of cruel reason is closed: *hubris, atē, hamartia, nemesis*.

Sophocles tragedy on *Ajax* is in other words an example of how truth would now be told from a sanitised position within language and taught in the practice of moderation and self-restraint [*sōphrosynē*], as knowledge no longer supports man's friendship with war, at least in the archaic sense. Obviously, this is not a transformation that happens overnight, but it is clear that a remarkable change occurs in the course of a few centuries during which the glorious, heroic achievements of the man of war comes to be seen in a different light. The nascent political economy of the classical age will appear then first as an interrogation by the tragedians of the old order and its breakdown. As we saw in Sophocles, the caricature of the archaic *hērōs* will constitute an indispensable cultural function in this interrogation, as the image of the man of the primitive and distorted resemblances who belongs to the old world. It is a discourse bend on telling a different truth about the figure of the *hērōs*, a discourse that tries to unmask him, to peel of his divine glow, layer by layer, and gaze into the ruins of what once read as signs of man's friendship with war. This discourse says that the deeds and acts of the *hērōs* are born in burning towns and on ravaged fields. They are the sad brainchild of the delusional mind and the corrupted soul whose desire is dominated by war [*polemou epithumētēs*]. The warrior, no longer *hērōs*, is the murderer of his own, the torturer of innocents and the crude taker of women, even those of royal blood. So we learn in Euripides' *Troades*, which takes place after the battle of Troy. Tragedy now tells the story of how the Trojan women suffered in the aftermath of the battle, and how their grief over the loss of their husbands and their city is exchanged for horror when the Achaeans dole out additional deaths and divide their shares of women among them. Again Ajax appears, this time dragging Cassandra, the daughter of King Priam and Queen Hecuba, away from the temple of Apollo, having 'carried her off'. At this point, the expression *harpazein* meaning 'to carry off' has attained strong connotations to rape, and, as the correlative to this newfound sense of moral transgression, tragedy has discovered the corrupted soul responsible for such cruelty. The economy of desire [*epithumia*] now provides the cipher of truth, as the old kinship of war and affect is exorcised and its resemblances

scattered. Order is no longer written in the archaic codes of *menis*, just as *thumos*, *bia*, and *kratos* more and more often appear as signs of the dangerous forces of *epithumia* that have become permanent residents of the unruly soul.

Is it a newfound cruelty that now compels the classical tragedian to deliver the *hērōs* over to the mockery of the crowd, to leave him to dwell in his solitary sovereignty that puts him on the path of madness, delusion, and suicide? As I said, what appears in tragedy is rather the transformation of the idea of order, as it occurs in the transition from the *Logos* of *polemos* to the idea of order as *arkhē*. In this shift, archaic *menis* will be externalised as *mania* and referred to a relationship of opposition to political order. At the same time, it will be internalised as ‘domesticated’ rage, which is put to use in various affairs of the citizen, such as the *militia* [military] and the *stratia* [army], where it, guided by self-restraint [*sōphrosynē*], will be seen as part of the virtue of courage and manliness [*andriea*]. *Agōnia* moves from the battlefield and into the soul as order becomes contingent on a battle for power over oneself. The discovery of war in the soul would be one of the first signs in which the order of the ruling principle of *arkhē* shows itself to man, signs which would then be written on the world for man to recognise, imitate, and partake in as *protagonistēs* of the new order of love and war. We find this emergent order in tragedy, but also, for example, in the elaborate art carved out on the Athenian treasury at Delphi. Here, the image of the *hērōs* Theseus battling the Amazon queen appears. No longer ruled by the love and friendship of war, combat arrives to the *hērōs* through the simultaneous inclusion of struggle in the soul and exclusion of the raging forces of *polemos*. Archaic rage will appear on the side of this exclusion as the Other, the Amazon, in whom the love and friendship of war will persist as a society in which order remains coded entirely in *polemos* distributing new lines of flight back into the old world.

It is easy to see, though, that the access to this pathway is precisely what is at stake in this struggle between the *hērōs* and the Amazon. We are still in a relationship of *agōnia* in the sense of the irreducible relationship of opposites – the sanitised position of the *hērō* as opposed to the warring position of the Amazon. However, in the archaic sense, Theseus is actually not really *agonistēs*, but rather, as protector of the order of the *polis*, he is *protagonistēs* (the

conjunction of *protos* [first] and *agonistēs*). He fights, not because the forces of *kosmos* have gathered in him, but because the ruling principle of command calls upon his soul and body to act as a vessel of the order of the *polis* and the hearth, which are to be defended from the invasion of the ferocious Amazons. The *polis* is to be defended from these dangerous women who have no *polis* [apolis] in the true sense and no soundness of mind at least in the classical sense. As duBois has noted, *amazonomachiai* [Amazon battle] was a very popular subject on classical vase paintings. Along with *centauromachiai* [Centaur battle], *amazonomachiai* articulates the site on which the citizen warrior comes to discover his role as the defender of the *polis* against the multitude of profoundly affective creatures, some real others the work of fable, that loom in the dimension of a crude archaic past, a horizon that must permanently be pushed back over the threshold by meeting this tremendous enemy force in battle.

At the site of *heterotopia*, classical man will do battle with the Other,³² but gradually the powerful forces of *polemos* that belong to this strange host of intense, virile, and hostile creatures will be tamed and their alluring otherness dry up in the codes of order, as these heterogeneous forces become fixed under the theme of being without *polis* [apolis] and without hearth [anestios], a theme that will occur frequently in classical political discourse. The possibility of the dangerous coagulations of the Same and the Other is avoided, even if, for some time, the Cynics would in fact use this epithet and refer to themselves as *apolis* while living among the citizens of the classical *polis*. But in the generation that passes from Plato to Aristotle, the figure of the one who is without *polis* will move from the margins of society and once again appear on the outside. He will slip into these borderlands to be reborn as a strikingly dissociated figure, stripped of any riveting beauty or vigilance of those otherworldly creatures the *hērōs* met in battle.

In Aristotle, then, the one who by nature [kata phusin] is *apolis* or *anestios* will eventually be seen as either a 'bad man' or something 'unnatural' beyond men and the mundane sphere of mortals; he will be likened to the man who is

³² As duBois explains: "The others – barbarian, Centaur, woman/barbarian/animal – were all represented in tragedy, shown in changing postures of resistance to the *polis* culture." (duBois 1999: 151).

dominated by war [polemou epithumētēs]. Trapped on the other side of order, the old kinship of man and war is dispelled and reduced to something merely unnatural. At the site of an absolute distance to the old friendship of war, the citizen warrior will be called upon to struggle against the bad forces within himself as well as those that appear on the outside. By then, the sign *hērōs* carved out on the great halls of the *polis*, where he defended the *polis* from chimeras and other theriomorphous beings, will seem increasingly outmoded. Theseus struggle against the Amazon stands between these two worlds, the archaic and the classical. His struggle is not a fight against the unnatural or the bad as such, since the *thērion* [wild beast], but rather the expression of the growing awareness that *polemos* must be subjected to steering.

In this process, tragedy has gradually begun to function as a correlate to *arkhē*, but this is by no means a fixed or coherent form. It is a highly mutable form that functions, not only as a means of exposing the breakdown of the old order, but also as a contestation of the new order as it transgresses the old boundaries of custom [nomos]. So before the practice of a self-relationship, with the proper use of the pleasures and the cultivation of the affects, is integrated into a political economy of the good, tragedy will bear witness to the resurgence of the terrible [deinon]. Tragedy will recount how the first long shadow that fell upon the old order came from the early protagonists of the ruling principle; from the *arkhōn* and the *stratēgos* [general] that seek to rule in accordance with 'the best and wisest' of plans. We are in other words close to the classical notion of the good, but rather than praising the wise ruler who seeks the good of political community, as the classical philosophers would do, tragedy will expose how the activity of ruling by the *stratēgos* violates *nomos*. At the site of war, the attempt to do good in ruling by command will bring about the terrible. One such moment appears with *Antigone*. It is a very rich text, a work of overwhelming rigor, which I will not try to convey in its full significance. It is an important text, though, so I will try to give it the appropriate attention.

In any case, the play sets off with the dialogue between Antigone and her sister Ismene. In Antigone's first lines we learn that ruin, shame, and dishonour have fallen upon their family as the *stratēgos* Creon has issued a decree in the *polis* declaring that Polynices, the brother of Antigone, shall be left unburied on

the battlefield, 'for the birds a pleasing store as they look to satisfy their hunger'. So says Antigone, stricken with grief. In the first lines of the chorus, we learn that it was the 'strife-filled claims' [artheis neikeōn ex amphilogōn] of Polynices that led to the outbreak of the Theban civil war. Polynices is a traitor of Thebes, then, who, in the mind of the *arkhōn*, cannot be honoured with a proper burial, that is, if the honour of those who died defending Thebes from its enemies is to be retained. In secrecy, however, Antigone performs the funeral ritual on the dead body of Polynices defying the decree. When Creon discovers the deceit of Antigone, he buries her alive in cave. By word of the poet Tiresias, Creon now learns that the gods are displeased by his actions and refuse to accept any sacrifices or prayers from Thebes. So he sets out to undo his mistakes and see to it that Polynices has his proper burial. But Creon is too late. His rage has set in motion things that cannot be undone – he has crossed the limits of *atē* and *harmatia*, and so he not only fails to alleviate his punishment over Antigone, who commits suicide before Creon's men can get to her, he also loses his own son and wife both of whom take their own lives, one because of his loss of Antigone, the other because of the loss of her son. In seeking out order [arkhē] by issuing the decree that consigns Polynices to public shame and humiliation, as he leaves his body to be devoured by vultures under the open sky, Creon makes a fatal misjudgement [harmatia]. He violates custom [nomos] according to which no one can refuse a man his proper burial. Consumed by the desire to strike at his opponent beyond the sphere where he as king could rightfully punish him, Creon has crossed the limit and fallen prey to *hubris*.

In his seminar on *Antigone*, Lacan has remarked that the misjudgement of Creon consists in the fact that he, as ruler, seeks to promote the good. Not the Supreme Good, Lacan is careful to explain, all the while that Plato has not yet formulated this idea. However, as he who leads the community, Creon acts 'to promote the good of all', says Lacan, as he evokes the notion of the *Begriff* in allusion to Kant and the idea of practical reason: "Note that his language [Creon's] is in perfect conformity with that which Kant calls the *Begriff* or concept of the good. It is the language of practical reason. His refusal to allow a sepulchre for Polynices, who is an enemy and a traitor to his country, is founded on the fact that one cannot at the same time honour those who have defended

their country and those who have attacked it.” (Lacan 2008: 318-319). Now, Lacan continues, this is where tragedy reveals to us a ‘first objection’: “The good cannot reign over all without an excess emerging whose fatal consequences are revealed to us in tragedy.” (Ibid.). The ‘Kantian’ alliance of reason and the good, which in time would make clear the identity of law and reason, becomes the *bête noire* of Creon, Lacan argues. Lacan certainly seems right in his diagnosis of our patient Creon. When one reads the text, the idea of the good clearly appears to be present in Creon as when he remarks that ‘anyone who directs the entire *polis* should observe the best and wisest [aristōn] plans’ (Antigone 179). Moreover, Lacan shows an acute sensitivity to the fundamental displacement at stake in the relationship of the ruler to *nomos*. In his pursuit of the good, Lacan explains, Creon passes over into another sphere. It is the sphere that appears beyond *nomos*, opening up the terrain of the ‘sovereign law’; ‘to promote the good of all as the law without limits, the sovereign law, the law that goes beyond or crosses the limit’ (Lacan 2008: 318). One might think that one has said enough, then, when one has interpreted the play as the expression of the objection by tragedy to the principle of the sovereign law. However, we must be careful not to seek the *logos* the poet recounts in our contemporary realm of ideas. As Lacan in fact notices, Creon is obviously unaware that his actions have carried him onto a new terrain where, in time, the ruling principle of *arkhē* would gradually expand the boundaries of authority under the theme of life according to the good. This is also to say that the story of *Antigone* does not unfold at the site of the sovereign law; it all does not begin with sovereignty, the idea life according to the good, or the kind of perfect community the philosophers will come to dream about. It begins with war. Specifically, the play takes place in the aftermath of war and sets off as the *stratēgos* attempts at ruling over the exigencies of war by arresting the forces of *polemos*. War has now advanced to a point where the *deinon* has become the concern of the ruler. As Creon issues the decree, he is trying to steer *polemos* by intervening in the relations of forces so as to make the *nomos* of custom abandon one side in the struggle, while giving the power to the other. In doing so, he does not seek the good. He is rather trying to steer the course of events in which ‘the Fire-god’s

[Arēs] pine-fed flame' had almost seized the crown of Thebes' towers. He is trying to prevent the dreadful War-god from making a return:

Shaft of the sun, fairest light of all that have dawned on Thebes of the seven gates, you have shone forth at last, eye of golden day, advancing over Dirce's streams! You have goaded with a sharper bit the warrior of the white shield, who came from Argos in full armour, driving him to headlong retreat. He set out against our land because of the strife-filled claims of Polynices, and like a screaming eagle he flew over into our land, covered by his snow-white wing, with a mass of weapons and crested helmets... he gaped around our sevenfold portals with spears thirsting for blood; but he left before his jaws were ever glutted with our gore, or before the Fire-god's [Arēs] pine-fed flame had seized our crown of towers. So fierce was the crash of battle swelling about his back, a match too hard to win for the rival of the dragon. (Antigone 100-125).

One will notice that the knowledge of war no longer so much appears as a celebration of the sudden rupture of rage inspired by the gods. Rather, it appears as an account that seems to interrogate war to seek out an origin. A slight shift has occurred in the knowledge of war. A concern about the dreadful and the terrible seem to appear at the level of the world of mere mortals. War came to the Thebans, the chorus tells us in the first lines, not because the dreadful War-god had inspired fire in the souls of men. On the contrary, it was the 'strife-filled claims' of Polynices that brought about the raging forces of the War-god. The dangerous forces of *polemos* have caught the attention of man. An attempt of localising them seems to appear, as they are traced to an origin in the strife-filled soul, which now must be held accountable for war. The soul has in other words become a principle of intelligibility of *polemos*, if only in a rather hazy, ambiguous sense all the while that *polemos* has yet to be identified in terms of the singular identity of war. Perhaps it is no coincidence, then, that Polynices [Polyneikes], which literally means 'multiple strife', resembles the indistinction of *polemos* – *polemos* has yet to be tamed by the identity of the signified.

In any case, with the death of Polynices, justice has been done upon the polemicist, 'for Zeus detests above all the boasts of a proud tongue'. Still, the dreadful memory of battle fills the air with a foul stench. It is in the minds of all

Thebans covering their souls in darkness, as if the chimera of the dragon [drakōn] still lingered on, hovering above the city with the seven gates. *Antigone* is marked by war. It is trying to get away from war: “let us make for ourselves forgetfulness after the recent wars, and visit all the temples of the gods with night-long dance and song. And may Bacchus, who shakes the earth of Thebes, rule our dancing”, the chorus sings (150-54). So, it all does not begin with the sudden arrival on stage of Creon as the *protagonistēs* of life according to the good. What appears is rather the site of war on which the *stratēgos* will try to contain and steer the exigencies born out of the last battle that has been fought. As we will see, this is clearly related to theme of the good, it is in fact intrinsic to it, but what makes Creon cross the limit that marks the threshold to the new order is not to be found in any elaborate will to do good. In fact, it is not even the effect of a conscientious calculation, if we by conscientious calculation are to understand the logic of practical reason or for that matter what Aristotle would later define as the *logos*; a certain rational faculty that enables the subordination of the passions by the mind in accordance with the virtue of moderation [sōphrosynē]. The character of Creon is far from the ideal of the virtuous man we will learn of in Aristotle. He is actually closer to the man of passions of the old world. This is a critical distinction. Just as Creon does not arrive on stage as the wise ruler who seeks the good, so the course of events cannot be analysed in terms of the mimetic function of subjects acting in the world. Tragedy happens, not because of the actions of conscientious subjects, but rather out of accident, error, and succession. Action is bound to a chain of events, which is beyond the control of the fleeting sense of selves we find in Creon and Antigone. *Atē* has taken possession over both and put them on the path of disaster. It is important to note the sense in which *atē* is employed here. While it can be translated as ‘seduction’ or ‘misfortune’, this really does not cover the meaning of the word. It is not to be mistaken for the feeble sentiments of seduction or misfortune. *Atē* is closer to the rage and fury of the old world, if to some extent curbed, reshaped, and temporalised by the economy of desire. The poet will still situate rage on the side of the disturbing course of events, which is tragedy. However, rage and fury are not really put in opposition to *arkhē* in support of the emergent order of things. Nor do they function in a caricature that exposes the old world as an

order of primitive resemblances. Rather, they are exposed and examined in their effects as they enter into a different register of human affects pertaining to a different sense of order. In this new register, *atē* reads as the sign of a force that strikes Creon and Antigone and binds them to a chain of events at the threshold where a certain limit is about to be crossed. Here, the spectator is invited to witness how the course of descent unfolds at this threshold where the tense force relations inherited from the last battle are bursting with pregnancy as the limit is about to be crossed. This is where *atē* will have our protagonists, Creon and Antigone, who will fight a new battle of the same war.

To realise what exactly is stake in this battle, we must pay attention to Sophocles' distinction between forms of law. When the term *nomos* appears, the poet speaks of custom, which is simply the law that has been handed down from the ancient ancestors and thus cannot easily be changed by the command of any king. This is then distinguished from the activity of the *stratēgos* issuing a decree [*kērugma*], namely, the one that denies Polynices the funeral ritual, as prescribed by custom. The word *kērugma* occurs in classical discourse in connection with terms such as *arkhein* [to rule over] and *kratein* [to dominate] expressing the kind of activity in which the *stratēgos* assumes the intrinsically strategic role of ruling by command. Eventually, however, the ruling principle will be seen as the origin of law [*nomos*], which is precisely when the urgency of the good will expand the boundaries of ruling. By contrast, the archaic *polis* remains rather closed off to the potentiality of law. *Nomos* [custom] is closer to pure actuality than it is open to potentiality.³³ In this sense, we could also say that the archaic *polis* is the site of history, more so at least than it opens up a horizon of potentiality that goes beyond the limits of *nomos*. In *Antigone*, law is still rooted in this understanding of *nomos* as custom, as that which is given to man by Zeus. In fact, this understanding is posited as the ground of reasoning of Antigone when she, caught in the act of performing the forbidden deed, explains her actions to Creon. In response to Creon who furiously interrogates her about how she 'dared overstep the law', Antigone says:

³³ As Allen explains, the correspondence between *nomos* and divine law attests to the fact that *nomos* refers to practices inherited as public possession over which no single individual could or might claim personal authority (2008: 92).

Yes, since it was not Zeus that declared me that decree, and since not of that kind are the laws which Justice who dwells with the gods below established among men. Nor did I think that your decrees were of such force, that a mortal could override the unwritten and unfailing statutes given us by the gods. (450-55).

The decree issued by the *stratēgos*, Antigone says, cannot have the force of law since it violates *nomos* [custom]. The chorus agrees (365-70): “When he honours the laws of the land and the justice of the gods to which he is bound by oath, his city prospers. But banned from his city [apolis] is he who, thanks to his rashness, couples with disgrace.” So, by issuing the decree, Creon becomes *apolis*; he becomes without a *polis*. Creon stands outside of the *polis* as the betrayer of the law whereas the heroine Antigone stands as the defender of *nomos*.

So, at the threshold to the classical period we find tragedy contesting the activity of ruling by command, as the *arkhōn* transgresses the old boundaries of custom [nomos]. Thus far, it would seem as if tragedy makes a return to the archaic world then, forgetting the disturbing forces of madness that had seemingly come to haunt the *hērōs*. In fact, one cannot fail to see a striking analogy to the *Iliad*. In a manner not so different from the *logos* recounted of Agamemnon and Achilles, we find the *arkhōn* intervening in the relations of forces beyond his rightful sphere of influence, and, as his strategic opposite, the *hērōinē* who brings a fury to bear on the sovereign activity of command. Antigone is certainly the heroine in whom the old friendship with war to some extent still persists. She is obviously not the disordered player of the Same and the Other, as he is represented in Sophocles’ rather unsublime *hērōs*, *Ajax*. Antigone is not struck by madness, and her actions have little to do with the spirit of resentment or any feeling of self-pity or vanity. Antigone is closer to the figure of Achilles who does not display the kind of character faults we find in *Ajax*. Like Achilles, Antigone never seems to fall prey to *hubris*. She has not invited the agony – disgrace and wrongdoing capture her. The sovereign rule is forced onto her subverting her autonomy and dishonouring her family. She is forced to live in the house of Creon, she is subject to his law, and, at the same time, she has to live with the memory that Creon and his allies are responsible

for the death of her brothers and the sacrilege of refusing Polynices his proper funeral. Like the *Iliad*, then, it seems tragedy dwells on the wound and the repeated injury inflicted on the heroine as she is subjected to the repeated blows of *atē*. In a manner similar to Achilles, it is this unbearable wretchedness and shame that make Antigone cross the line to try to go beyond the state of *atē*, where, once subject to these terrible forces, only the gods can save a valiant soul from being consumed by the forces of Hades. Beyond this limit, the heroine will find no exaltation but in death. Antigone knows it, but like the true *hērōinē* she never breaks character.³⁴ Yet, the order of things is no longer quite the same. While it seems as if it is simply the attempt of ruling by command that brings about the *deinon*, it would be a mistake to reduce the *logos* the poet recounts to a mere lesson on the sovereign violation of the sacred statutes of *nomos*.

What we must pay attention to here is the entry of the *deinon*. The cipher of the tragic encounter, the *deinon* emerges at the point where the divine forces of *polemos* have taken hold of man to steer the course of events to the inevitable endpoint of tragedy. The entry of the *deinon* is the sign of the gathering of *logos* at its most intense, and therefore closest to truth [*alētheia*], as the unmediated confrontation of opposites. In his reading of the play, Heidegger has accurately captured the function of the *deinon*, as he directs our attention to the point where the poet makes it appear. As Heidegger is careful to explain, the point where the *deinon* is disclosed is actually not with the disgraceful act of Creon leaving the body of Polynices to the vultures. The terrible does not appear before it is revealed that someone has defied Creon by performing the funeral ritual on Polynices.³⁵ The *deinon* appears with Antigone, Heidegger explains (2000: 112). Certainly, the figure of Creon expresses the traits of the character who inevitably will face *nemesis*, driven as he is, in his sacrilegious hubris, to strike at his enemy beyond his rightful sphere of influence. But it is not until Antigone, captured by *atē*, goes up against Creon that the *deinon* appears and a certain irrevocable chain of events is set in motion. It is precisely at this point

³⁴ Clearly, Antigone realises that her doings will claim her life, but like the archaic *hērōs* she never strays from the path where, once you have entered, no escape can be procured from death.

³⁵ We do, however, see a glimpse of the *deinon* in the dialogue between Ismene and Antigone, as Antigone rejects and banishes her with cruelty and scorn for her unwillingness to partake in burying their brother.

where she crosses the threshold that the chorus enters and begins to bemoan the *deinon*. Although Creon certainly commits sacrilege and is punished accordingly by the gods, tragedy is not simply the outcome of Creon's violation of *nomos*. Antigone is to blame too.

How is this so? Here, in the earliest appearance known in existing Greek literature, the word *autonomos* turns up.³⁶ It is the conjunction of *auto* [self] and *nomos*, which is to say that Antigone, although the heroine who defends *nomos*, is also the dangerous individual who defies the *arkhōn* and makes her own law. In the remarks of the chorus, we learn that this will take her life (Antigone 821). In fact, the chorus not only laments how Antigone makes her own laws, but also that this happens out of her 'self-willed impulses'. Caught-up in her self-willed impulses, Antigone is responsible for her own destruction. Here, it is important to note the curious use of the word *orgē*, which in the archaic vocabulary typically denotes 'natural impulse', as in rage and spiritedness. In the comment by the chorus, this meaning is displaced as *orgē* is connected to the idea of a self [auto] to form the specific meaning of being *autognōtos* [self-willed]. As we also saw the glimpse of in Polynices, certain self-willed or should we perhaps say auto-impulsive actions now open up being to the dreadful passages of rage and affect. What surfaces here is in other words the new register of human affects wherein the signification of *orgē* is restructured by the economy of desire that begins to postulate a certain sense of the self. This is how *autognōtos* and *autonomos* denote the certain kind of behaviour, which is not merely bound to the tragic cycle of *hubris-atē-harmatia-nemesis*, but also leads to suicide; in the economy of desire, rage can find no exaltation but in what reverberates inwards until it implodes consuming the soul of man, consuming being. If you as fail to rule over desire and make your own law, the gods will have your life. This is the message that resonates in the sense of being *autonomos*. Being, it seems, has entered into alliance with a new sense of order, a sense of order to which neither Creon nor Antigone can belong. We can trace this emergence in terms of the *deinon* in which we will see that Creon and Antigone, in their opposed confrontations, have in fact come to share a certain resemblance that appears on the opposite side of order, as the face of Other.

³⁶ See Allen (2008: 92).

To analyse the course of events, at the end of which the opposed confrontations of our two protagonists seem to have produced a certain new resemblance of the Other, we must try to trace the course of descent in terms of *alētheia* as the functioning of the *deinon* at the site of *polemos*. As noted, we are still in a world where fixed identities have yet to issue from the mind even if the poet has begun to speak of a certain vaguely defined will of the self. Certainly, the poet tells us at the beginning of the play that Creon is the ruler of the *polis* and Antigone the sister of dead Polynices. However, it is not before Antigone and Creon enter into a relationship of opposition that they truly step into appearance. Then their opposed confrontations give birth to the *hērōinē* and the *stratēgos* in the overwhelming coming-to-presence of *polemos*, as Heidegger would perhaps say. This is precisely when the *deinon* appears. As in Homer, the *deinon* appears at the site of *polemos* as *alētheia* on which difference emerges. The more Creon and Antigone step apart in opposition – the more the conjunction of opposites is accentuated – the better we can see the truth [alētheia]. One will notice then that they are indeed also the Same. *Polemos* is father of all giving birth to Antigone and Creon as they step apart in opposition as the *hērōinē* and the *stratēgos* to become the Same. However, contrary to Homeric poetry, in *Antigone*, the *Logos* of *polemos* is no longer unmediated. *Polemos* no longer simply answers to its own inner law, but must also answer to the order that has opened up at the division between forms of law. This is how Creon and Antigone appear on the other side of an order, which Homeric poetry shows no traces of. In their struggle, they become caught in the resemblance that now animates order; they move in parallel on the outer edges of the ancient culture of *nomos*, as the figure of the Other. Although Antigone is certainly the heroine and the defender of *nomos* and Creon the transgressor of the laws given by Zeus, as *autonomos* they both end up as one and the same in a kind of doubling of the figure who is without a *polis* [apolis].

As noted previously, this idea of the one who is *apolis* will appear as an important theme in classical political discourse, but by then the meaning the tragedians were so much at pains to convey has been lost. In *Antigone*, we should note that the *logos* of the one who becomes *apolis* in making his own law articulates a site on which the poet records the change that seems to take place

in the shift towards the new order. This is in fact the *logos* in which *Antigone* culminates: with the arrival of the new order born from the exigencies of war, the *hērōs* comes to resemble the *arkhōn*. But how is this possible? How is it possible that the *hērōinē* and the *stratēgos* come to resemble one another without destroying the fundamental ordering codes of society? The answer we find is far from reassuring and the real surprise of the play. It appears in the passage where the chorus sings of the one who is *apolis*. While one cannot fail to hear in the remarks of the chorus the reference to Creon, the chorus actually never mentions his name. Certainly, Creon is the one who in his foolishness ‘couples with disgrace’, as he fails to honour the customs of the land and the justice of the gods, and so becomes *apolis*. But a few lines earlier in the play we learn that the character the chorus sings of is not Creon, but *anthrōpos*, which is to say man in general as a certain animal species. History, it seems, is on the verge of breeding a new character of man:

Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man. This power spans the sea, even when it surges white before the gales of the south-wind, and makes a path under swells that threaten to engulf him. Earth, too, the eldest of the gods, the immortal, the unwearied, he wears away to his own ends, turning the soil with the offspring of horses as the plows weave to and fro year after year. The light-hearted tribe of birds and the clans of wild beasts and the sea-brood of the deep he snares in the meshes of his twisted nets, and he leads them captive, very-skilled man. He masters by his arts the beast who dwells in the wilds and roams the hills. He tames the shaggy-maned horse, putting the yoke upon its neck, and tames the tireless mountain bull. (335-50).

In a world where truth is still seen as *alētheia* and where the conflict of opposites continuously provoke new and more powerful offspring, what seems to read as a celebration of the deeds and acts of *anthrōpos* simultaneously announces the birth of an order of things wherein man has overstepped a threshold in assuming a kind of mastery that could only belong to the gods. The subject that now begins to speak in history is one whose relationship to *nomos* and *phusis* seems to border on *hubris*, as if this subject had come into being with the violation of an unspoken taboo, the kind of ancient taboo that surrounds the eldest of the gods, Earth, and with it the entire cosmic chain of resemblances.

We should note here that while *nomos* certainly demarcates a certain distance between man and animal,³⁷ at this point in time, *nomos* appears at level with *phusis*; *nomos* is of the same order of reality as nature, as that which is [phusis]. In the birth of an order that would gradually wrestle itself free of the archaic ordering codes of *nomos* as custom, *anthrōpos* emerges in close proximity to the *deinon* and within a certain field of knowledge that transgresses the immediacy of *phusis* and *nomos*.

Here, we can return to Heidegger. According to Heidegger, what appears in the transgression of *phusis* is what the Greeks referred to as *technē*, which is neither to be understood as art nor skill, and it has no resemblance with technology in the modern sense: “We translate *technē* as ‘knowing’... Knowing, in the genuine sense of *technē*, means initially and constantly looking out beyond what, in each case, is present at hand... Knowing is the ability to set being into work as something that in each case *is* in such and such a way.” (Heidegger 2000: 122). Now, Heidegger says, what characterises *technē* is the *deinon* by which he means not simply the terrible event, but also a certain state of being in which the one who is subject to it always stands in a position of daring to cross the limit. In doing so, in crossing the limit, says Heidegger, he creates through ‘violence-doing’. Not in the pastoral sense, but in the sense that transgression appears in the event of man breaking into nature to form culture, Heidegger argues, as he explains how the Greeks associated *technē* with the creation of authentic artwork. This is true, but *technē* is also the knowledge that concerns the cultivation of a domain, the domestication of animals, the mastery of land and sea, and all that belongs to the subsistence of life of the classical *oikonomia* [household] and the sedentary space of the *polis*. The semantic field of *technē* therefore concerns more than the privileged form of sublime artwork. Moreover, I think we should replace the word ‘violence’ here with mastery, though keeping in mind the meaning of transgression.

Indeed, it seems to me that what we see reflected in *Antigone* is that tragedy seems to go hand in hand with *technē* as a particular kind of knowledge belonging to an order in which man comes to posit himself as master and ruler

³⁷ As Hesiod says in his *Works and Days*, *nomos* is Zeus’ gift to man rather than to the ‘fishes and beasts and winged fowls’ (276-277).

over land and sea and the wild beast that belong to 'the eldest of the gods', Earth. In *Antigone* we witness how the *technē* of setting *phusis* into work, intrinsic to the practices of ruling and steering issuing from the principle of *arkhē*, is accompanied by a course of descent written in the codes of the *deinon*. It is with *technē* that *anthrōpos* discovers the knowledge of ruling over *phusis*, the steering of *phusis* towards a certain end. This end is yet to be recognised as the good. In fact, it remains tied up with the *deinon*, so much so that the intervention into the relationship of forces by the command of ruling and steering reads as signs that a certain course of events is set into motion, which is tragedy.

We can see how this *logos* is to some extent already present in Homer; the transgression by Agamemnon sets in motion the chain of events, which endpoint is the underworld of Hades. This *logos* persists in the tragedians of the early classical period, however, in the later poets we can see that the order of things is no longer quite the same. The archaic world, where the poet's song made the divinity of rage be known to man as the *deinon* poured the fire of *kosmos* into the life of mortals with the kind amazement worthy of Arēs, now occurs at a certain distance. A new economy of the human affects has emerged at the site where the great speculation about the self has awakened amid the carnage of madness and illusion. Still, as we see in *Antigone* the *hērōinē*, rage and affect, though certainly tamed and reshaped by the economy of desire, have not lost every positive relation to action. The contours of the archaic friendship with war are yet visible. In a world where *technē* and *arkhē* have begun to exert a certain influence, it still has a positive valorisation even if what used to read as the glorious deeds and acts of a *hērōinē*, bound to the friendship with war and the steering of the *kosmos* by *polemos*, is now seen from the vantage point of a slightly skewed perspective, as the self-willed impulses of the one who falls prey to the passions. In fact, not before the advent of philosophical discourse will rage and spiritedness be aligned in a position to knowledge in which the old resemblances disappear. Beginning with Plato, rage will be transformed under the theme of inspired madness into the sober *mania* of viewing ideas. By then the madness of the old world has been exorcised, as order is sought out in accordance with the idea of the good. Yet, the order of things always seems liable to lapse into excess and intoxication, as the spirit of man slips into the

channels of love and war. Here, on the other side of order, the chimeras of the old world will linger on, as the face of the Other.

Now, the transition from the *Logos* of *polemos* to the order of *arkhē* seems to gather pace roughly around the time of the Persian invasion at the beginning of the fifth century, culminating in the period following the Peloponnesian War. During these centuries, sobriety and seriousness will gradually begin to take over the representation of war. Knowledge detaches itself from war in order to return to war a form of knowledge that puts itself in opposition to war, to combat and conquer war, to ruler over war; to fit it into a sequence of events wherein it is made intelligible in terms of time and space, preconditions and effects. The temporalisation of the affects would be accompanied by the temporalisation of war. This form of knowledge is very different from the oracular truth versed by poet. It is wedded to evidence, detail and fact, and to establishing connections between events to form a series of events within a temporally defined space. Its authors are meticulous, patient, and detached in their pursuit of this knowledge. Its ambition is to seek out war where no Greek *poiitis* or *logographos* had hitherto sought to discover war: to apply the ordered space to the undifferentiated space, to apply time to the futile and the ephemeral, to decipher truth by means of the *logos* of mind [nous] rather than to represent signs by means of verse and lyric attuned to the melody of *kosmos*; to investigate war, not from the poet's vantage point within the Orphic kinship of the signs that speak of *polemos*, but from the exteriority of the illuminated space of logical exercise. Against the constantly mobile whole of *polemos*, it will divide the past against the present; to explain the present in terms of what happened in the past, to trace the course of descent of this present in the attempt to recover the remains of the old order that died before the fall of the Athenian empire.

§ 3 *Historia* – The Calligraphy of War and Time

3.1. With the opening phrase “Thucydides the Athenian wrote up the Peloponnesian War”, Thucydides, presenting his work in the peculiar detached form of third person, sets the tone for this distinctly novel representation of war, which is, Thucydides says, *historia*.³⁸ This form of knowledge is not *historia* in the sense Herodotus adheres to in the title of his work of the same name. The work of Herodotus cannot be considered *historia* since it is the work of a *logographos* [storyteller], whereas, according to Thucydides (I: 21-22), *historia* marks a quite different undertaking. Scholars have pointed to the particular use by Thucydides of the verb *xungraphein* (*xungrapse ton polemon*, meaning “he wrote up the war”).³⁹ In Greek literature, *xungraphein* occurs in texts that rely on accuracy and attention to detail such as texts on medicine, architecture, and cooking, but here Thucydides uses the verb in the most unusual context of *historia* opening up a space for the acquisition of the knowledge of war, which seeks to break free of traditional *historia*.⁴⁰ Indeed, this form of inquiry into *polemos* seems to have been new to the Greeks. However, it is important to note that it maintains a certain structural familiarity in syntax to the oratory tradition. Like the poet, Thucydides proceeds by way of antilogies, the juxtaposition of opposites.⁴¹ Moreover, his arguments rely on the pairing of opposing speeches.⁴² To this extent, Thucydides remains within the linguistic

³⁸ See Lebow on how the *History of the Peloponnesian War* represents a break with the oratory tradition expressing a new and distinctly different representation of war (2003: 73). Because of his inauguration of the method of *historia*, Thucydides is often referred to as the father of scientific history.

³⁹ See Connor (1984: 248); Lebow (2003: 72-73).

⁴⁰ Traditional *historia* is what we find, for example, in Herodotus’ account of the battle at Marathon.

⁴¹ Lebow provides an instructive example of how Thucydides’s account is a dialogue of opposite pairs: “rational decision [gnōme] and chance [tuchē], speech [logos] and deed [ergon], law [nomos] and nature [physis]...” (2003: 112; 72-74).

⁴² In example, when representatives of Corcyra and Corinth appear before the Athenian assembly, immediately before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, their speeches are juxtaposed one against the other, and when the Athenian and the Corinthian representatives

order of *polemos* throughout his *historia*. But contrary to the poet and the storyteller, Thucydides (1.22) seeks to acquire knowledge principally through what he says are eyewitness accounts [*autopsia*], which is not to be confused with hearsay, that is, second-hand knowledge passed on from the observer to the *histōr* who, in accumulating this form of knowledge, recounts *historia* in the traditional sense. While Thucydides also relies on second-hand knowledge as well as the knowledge of signs, he clearly attaches greater importance to this form of knowledge not merely because he personally, as *stratēgos* [general] during part of war, had seen and witnessed several events, but because *autopsia*, according to this taxonomy, is of a higher order in terms of accuracy and reliability than second-hand knowledge and the knowledge of signs: “Since he was a poet”, Thucydides says, “it is questionable whether we can have complete confidence in Homer’s figures...” However “there is no reason why we should not believe that the Trojan expedition was the greatest that had ever taken place.” (1.10: 23-25; 20-22).

Symptomatically for Thucydides, things are weighed in numbers and figures and deciphered in terms of their logical conditions of possibility. Magnitude and scale, but also the intrinsic qualities of things and their minutiae workings matter to this art of calculating force relations; of deducting and inferring measures for the capacities of forces, of determining strength and ability. Having discussed in detail the role of wealth in the sustenance of the Athenian army, Thucydides records their numbers and kind: “... they had 13.000 hoplites in addition to the 16.000 others who were in various garrisons and those engaged in the actual defence of the city... There were also 1.200 cavalry, included mounted bowmen; 1.600 unmounted bowmen, and 300 triremes ready for active service.” (2.13: 46-49; 60-62). Thucydides then proceeds to observe the strong points of the sedentary space of Athens’ walls, recounting the forces occupying this space and distinguishing between divisions within this space in terms of the allocation of forces: “The wall of Phalerum ran for four miles from the sea to the city circuit; and nearly five miles of the wall surrounding the city was guarded, though part of it was left without guard. Then there were the four

appear before the Spartan assembly, Thucydides once again relies on the pairing of opposing speeches.

and a half miles of the Long Walls to Piraeus, the outer one of which was garrisoned. Then, too, there were seven and a half miles of fortifications surrounding Piraeus and Munychia, half of which was guarded.” (2.13: 52-60).

Approximately 250 years separate Homer⁴³ from Thucydides and yet these representations of *polemos* are quite different. In Homer, heroes and warriors appear and disappear on a stage to perform their deeds and acts. The planes of Troy are a theatre in which euphoric expressions and emphatic gesticulations are exchanged, as man engage in ephemeral struggles unleashing his rage and affect. In a kind of theatrical play of power, man is bound to war and action to a series of exaltations that unbinds force; blazing up and disappearing in an instant, a pure catatonic rupture, the forces of *polemos* cannot be controlled or mastered since they are inspired by gods and not by kings or any mortal being. War steers men and heroes who fight in fluid formations intermingling kind and species; light-armed infantry appears among horsemen, chariots in the midst of archers.⁴⁴ We are far from the strategic warfare of Athena, the half-sister of Arēs and Plato’s war god of choice (Timaeus 21e, Laws 626d, 796c; Cratylus 406d). We are at the level of the singular *polemistēs* and at the point of emergence of the forces that govern his soul and body in accordance with *polemos*.

By contrast, in Thucydides we learn not so much of the individual *hērōs* or *polemistēs*, but rather of the relations of forces among *poleis*. In Thucydides, *polemos* emerge from within a complex set of relations of forces stretching in time and space: military strength (the types of infantry, the kind of organisation of troops, fortifications, supply lines etc.), alliances, wealth, and riches all constitute elements of an entire economy of forces, which manipulates the relations of forces in such a way that they acquire temporality, permanence, and are multiplied in their effects. *Polemos* is certainly seen at the level of man, but more often it is thought of at the level of political life [*bios politikos*] and at the hands of the Athenian *stratēgos* [general] or the Spartan *hēgemon* [king] who leads his forces into battle. Whereas in Homer and Heraclitus, and to some

⁴³ According to van Wees (2004: 252), comparative studies of Homer’s descriptions of weaponry and archaeological evidence situate ‘Homeric warfare’ at around 700-640 BC.

⁴⁴ See van Wees on the mode of combat of the archaic phalanx (2004: 166-168).

extent also in Sophocles, *polemos* steers both man and *kosmos*, by the time of Thucydides it seems war and man have changed places. *Polemos* has become subject to a particular *technē*, a *technē* in the most fundamental sense because it has little to do with the uncalculated or the random, the spontaneous eruption of force or its abrupt disappearance. Although it will eventually claim a relation to the forces that steer the *kosmos* in the great chain of simile and resemblance, the sense of *polemos* alluded to by Thucydides has more to do with an order in which difference rather than simple polarity and analogy distributes the resemblances between the Same and the Other; an order in which war is reshaped by the *technē* of steering *polemos* and the chain of resemblances revealed in the *arkhē* of *kosmos*.

This is not to say that Thucydides appears as a protagonist of the order of things he carefully describes. In fact, *historia*, in the sense alluded to by Thucydides, is neither an account of the question of capabilities, strategies, or alliances *per se*, nor an inquiry into how this economy of forces ought to be shaped by considerations of power issuing from the quintessential strategic mind. On the contrary, and in almost perfect consistency with the tragedians that preceded him, it is an account of a certain course of events. It is an inquiry into the political economy of war that has come into being in the classical world, an inquiry that seeks to interrogate the course of events that took place, as the opposed confrontations of forces brought about the Peloponnesian War. But why, then, when the poetic tradition was readily available to him, did Thucydides go to such painstaking efforts of inaugurating a decisively new kind of knowledge? I have previously noted how the works of the classical tragedians seem to reflect the dislocation of the archaic relationship of *polemos*, and along with it the poetic account [logos] of *polemos*. In this transition from the *Logos* of *polemos* to the order of *arkhē*, the old poetic form of knowledge has lost continuity with war, which is how it can no longer be relied upon to convey *alētheia*. As we saw in his comment on Homer, Thucydides realises this. *Logos* and *polemos* are no longer one and the same, but have been separated as *polemos* has become inscribed in the *technē* of steering, and, accordingly, the gathering of opposites by *logos* has come to resemble certain strategic calculations of the mind. The narrative position of the poet must therefore be

abandoned. In fact, the knowledge of war can only gain continuity with *alētheia* by bringing the *logos* to bear on *polemos* from the outside. Through the activity of *logos*, one sees and acts upon things in the domain of the real by recourse to what is provided by *technē*. Hence the peculiar introduction by Thucydides where he recounts the *logos* in the third person. This is to say, in order for knowledge to acquire continuity with war, it must now produce evidence to demonstrate that this knowledge is in fact of the same order of reality as the *technē* of war. Obviously, the *histōr* cannot produce this kind of evidence if the *logos* remains within the poetic realm of parable and paradox with their mutable potentialities. The chain of events must be disclosed in the domain of the real rather than in allegorical form, which is also how we find the unusual concern for accuracy, detail, and fact. With *historia*, the chain of events is referred to the domain of actuality and applied to time so as to draw a distinction between the Same and the Other, dispelling the chimeras of poetic truth from the body of knowledge. This is how *historia* will be at level with the new reality of war.

In the classical world, *polemos* has become subject to a certain *technē* then. By this I mean a certain knowledge and a set of practices that involve the assemblage of forces into a kind of living machinery or mechanic organism, which to a certain extent can be steered [kubernaō] by the *stratēgos* or the *hēgemon*. As we learn in Plato, this is done by the application of a particular set of rules of behaviour for regulating the relation between *stratēgos* and *stratiōtēs* [a citizen bound to military service]. In the *Laws* (942a-c), then, we find Plato carefully examining the rules governing this relationship between *stratiōtēs* and *arkhōn*,⁴⁵ which appears at the site of war where the disciplined space of the *stratiōtēs* overlays the erratic space occupied by the one who is *philopolemos*; the ordered space which belongs to the strategic assemblage of forces called a *stratia* [army] or *militia* [military]. Within this space, one must avoid the imprecise distribution of force and action, which happens, says Plato, if ‘anyone follows his own work’. One must eliminate the untimely or uncontrolled disappearance of individuals tending to their own matters of subsistence. In

⁴⁵ Rather than the term *stratēgos*, Plato uses the word *arkhōn* in the more general sense of ‘leader’ or ‘ruler’.

military affairs, Plato explains, “The vital point is that no one, man or woman, must ever be left without someone in charge of him; nobody must get into the habit of acting alone and independently, in all kinds of war, and in peace and war alike we must give our constant attention and obedience to our leader, submitting to his steering [*kubernōmenon*] even in tiny details. When the order is given we should stand, march, exercise, wash, feed, stay awake at night on duty as guards or messengers, and even in the midst of dangers not pursue the enemy or yield without a sign from our commander [*arkhōn*].”

This set of rules, enabling the functioning of the *stratia* and by which it becomes possible for the *arkhōn* [leader] to be *kubernōmenon*, furthermore relies on a specific tactic for keeping these forces in place, for consolidating them and for holding their ground in the theatre of war. While in Homer it is considered most shameful not to hold one’s ground and abandon a fellow *philopolemos*, the *hērōs* or *polemistēs* is not subject to the steering of the *stratēgos* or the *hēgemon*, since he answers neither to the *stratēgos* nor to the *hēgemon*, but to *polemos* by virtue of being *philopolemos* in which he is bound to the forces of *kosmos* and the will of gods. Reasserting his honour before Glaucus who had just put his courage into question, Hector says: “Believe me, fighting and the noise of chariots do not frighten me. But the will of Zeus who drives the storm-cloud always prevails. He can easily make a brave man run away and lose a battle, but another time that very same god will urge him to fight.” (Iliad XVII.174-178). By contrast, as we learn in Plato,⁴⁶ the apprehension of the lines of escape and pursuit is precisely the tactic by which the steering of the *stratia* operates – it is the principle from which it acquires its strength and consolidates

⁴⁶ While it was not considered cowardice to flee from an obviously superior enemy, the Greeks had an expression to denote the act of retreating from battle [*anablēsis*] in which the hoplite would leave his weapons and shield behind for a quicker escape. The verb *rhipsaspia* literally means ‘discarding the shield’, which, although clearly associated with certain stigmatising connotations, was nevertheless common practice. Writing in the *Laws*, Plato proposes to prosecute against the man guilty of such felonies and make him subject to punishment and penalty: “If a man finds the enemy at his heels and instead of turning round and defending himself with the weapons he has, deliberately lets them drop or throws them away, preferring a coward’s life of shame to the glorious and blessed death of a hero, then there should certainly be a penalty for losing his weapons by abandonment... If a man is convicted on a charge of shamefully dropping his weapons in war, a) *no general* or any other army officer must employ him as a soldier again, or appoint him to any position whatever; b) *and in addition* to being thus permitted, like the woman he is by nature, to avoid the risks that only men can run, the guilty man must also pay a sum of money: 1.000 drachmas if he belongs to the highest property-class, 500 if to the second, 300 if to the third and 100 if to the lowest.” (Laws 944c-945b).

its force. Although this principle or tactic clearly seems more fully developed by the time of Plato, it is actually attested to by the time of the Persian Wars in the oath sworn by the Greeks before the battle of Plataea in 479 BC. At this point in time, the bond between men and gods is still affirmed in sacrifices and in the significance given to omens, as Xenophon recounts in his *Hellenica* (1.4.12). However, immediately before the battle we find the Greeks engaged in the act of affirming, not so much the bond between men and gods, but rather the bond between *stratēgos* and *stratiōtēs*: “I shall not desert my *taxiarchos* [officer] or my *enōmotarkhēs* [group-leader] whether he is alive or dead, and I shall not leave unless the *hēgemones* lead us away, and I shall do whatever the *stratēgoi* may command...” (Tod II. 204: 25-31).⁴⁷

The emergence of the *technē* of steering by the *stratēgos* of the *stratiōtēs* marks the threshold of a dramatic change in the perception of the form and rationality of *polemos*, and during the classical era an obvious transformation of the knowledge of war takes place. The deeds and acts of the singular *polemistēs* ‘fighting in a rage’, as he ventures into fluid combat by stepping outside of the formation of the hoplite phalanx, are no longer praised by the Spartans as *arētē* [excellence] or seen as the sign of *arēios* (the adjective form of *Arēs*). By the time of the battle of Plataea, Herodotus tells us of the endeavours of Aristodemus, it has come to be seen as a conspicuous will to die worthy of no honour, even if Herodotus himself still praises Aristodemus as ‘by far the bravest man’ (Histories 9.71.2-4). In Herodotus, the new disparity between war and the knowledge that recounts it becomes clear. The kind of *historia* Herodotus recounts remains caught-up in the old poetic *logos*, as he praises Aristodemus for an archaic sense of *arētē* now denounced by the Spartans.⁴⁸ In Herodotus, the new sense of *polemos*, in which the idea of combat has gradually left less scope for displays of archaic *arētē*, is yet to be discovered. In combat [makhē], it has become a cardinal virtue to show obedience [aidōs], moderation

⁴⁷ The oath sworn by the Greeks is mentioned in several sources and recorded in an Athenian inscription dating from the fourth century (Tod II. 204: 25-31). While the inscription certainly uses a mixture of Athenian and Spartan epithets for war leaders, as pointed out by van Wees (2004: 243-244), the general sense of the oath seems clearly delineated.

⁴⁸ Herodotus interprets the Spartan condemnation of Aristodemus as the expression of envy. While this could also be taken to mean that hoplites could still charge forward with some honour (and drop back without complete shame), the Spartan discourse on *arētē* seems to contradict this view.

and self-restraint [*sōphrosynē*], which is basically the intention that guides Plato when, in his elucidations on the matters of military service, he stresses the importance that no man should ‘follow his own work’. For the *stratiōtēs*, but this is equally true of the *stratēgos*, it has become vital not to succumb to the forces of *menis* or *thumos*, because they have come to pose a permanent threat to the activity of warfare. As an assemblage of forces, the functioning of the *stratia* depends on man to show moderation and self-restraint and to submit to the steering of the *stratēgos*, the *arkhōn*, or the *hēgemon*. *Menis* and *thumos* are now quickly fading from the world of positive affects. They have come to belong to a different register in the restructuration of the ordering codes of combat.

When we encounter the virtue of *arētē* in classical discourse it has in fact come to resemble the sense of mastery expressed in the virtue of *sōphrosynē*. More precisely, *arētē* has attained the meaning of courage and manliness [andriea] around which the *paideia* of classical man is arranged, with its practices of endurance trials and gymnastics, contest and competition, the practice of hunting, the learning of pipe tunes and manly rhythms. Although Homer is fed as the mother’s milk to the young male Greek, and although *arētē* is certainly yet recognised as a sign which is written on the body of the *hērōs*, at the moment the poet’s song has been filtered through the sanitising gates of classical thought, *arētē* is no longer so much seen as something given by the gods and the forces of *kosmos*. Rather, it is recognised as something one must learn and practice for, that is, a *technē*.⁴⁹

The meaning of *arētē* has in other words now crossed the limit from where it will no longer signify the intensities of rage and pure catatonic force, but their moderation, domination, and subjection; the manipulation of the relations of forces, the curbing and alternation of the affects, the command and steering of these forces that now arise in their cultivated form as desire. Now, as the intensities of *polemos* are bent and shaped by the *technē* of steering the *stratia*, and as combat more and more often is discovered in the privileged form of a relationship among *poleis*, a remarkable displacement occurs. War moves into

⁴⁹ As Lebow notes, this is particularly true about the teachings of the Sophists who came to dominate Athenian philosophy in the second half of the fifth century: “They were subversive of the old aristocratic order in the deepest sense for they maintained that *arētē*... could be acquired through study, not only through breeding...” (2003: 109).

the soul of man. A new battlefield appears in the division of *polemos* into two analogous but contingent realms. The cries of the battlefield will echo in the soul as *polemos* emerges as spiritual combat in the waging of a war by the mind to straighten out the soul; to struggle against desire and spiritedness, to rule over them, to conquer them. It is the formation of an *askēsis*. In the Greek word *askēsis*, one should hear the all the connotations of an ascetics in the sense of a set of practices shaped, not merely from physical exercise, rigorous practice, and training, but also from practices of the soul taking aim at the heart of the affects; the domination of the passions, the struggle against desire. Here we can return to the passage in Plato from which the present study set out and add to it a certain gravity of war: “each man fights a private war against himself... This, sir, is where a man wins the first and best of victories – over himself”, says Cleinias the Cretan to the Athenian Stranger in a passage of the *Laws* (626d-e) and adds: “Conversely, to fall victim to oneself is the worst and most shocking thing that can be imagined”. In fact, if one falls victim to oneself on the battlefield, if one falls into the old habits of the singular *polemistēs* fighting in a rage, the enemy will have one’s life, as we saw in the Spartans’ view of Aristodemus.

With Plato, *polemos* permeates the soul. Man struggles against himself, because the ruling principle of *arkhē* pervades the mind, dividing the soul against itself and opposing it to itself in order for man to rise above *polemos* on multiple battlefields of pleasure and pain. Out of what was once the Same, the mind emerges as the site where the Same can now be discriminated from the Other, but only through the persistent and recurrent attempts of steering the strife of opposites. So the soul, says Plato in a passage of *Phaedrus*, can be likened to ‘the composite nature of a pair of winged horses and a charioteer’; “one of the horses is noble and of noble breed, but the other quite the opposite in breed and character.” (Phaedrus 246b). Like the chariot fighter struggling to steer his chariot driven by these contrary forces, so the soul of man is in a state of perpetual war struggling by means of *nous* [mind] to rule over the invasive forces of *thumos* [spiritedness] and *epithumia* [appetite].⁵⁰ It is instructive here

⁵⁰ In the *Republic*, Plato was to further elaborate his allegory for man’s ruling of himself dividing the soul into *nous*, *thumos*, and *epithumia*.

to briefly make a digression and trace the genealogy of this metaphor in which the chariot fighter comes to resemble the mind struggling with the soul. What we see is the abduction by an early political psychology of a practice, which in the classical world still has an iconographical standing; the ancient ritual of chariot fighting, an activity that was at least a thousand years old by the time Plato conceives of the tripartite soul. At that point in time, however, and until the Archaic period draws to a close, chariot fighting had a predominantly ceremonial character, even if some observers point to the first recorded battle in history as having been fought by chariots, namely, the battle of Megiddo in 1469 BC northern Palestine between the Egyptian pharaoh Tuthmosis III and an alliance under Hyksos leadership (Keegan 2004: 175). It appears the first recorded battle in history was concluded almost without bloodshed (Ibid.), and while the imagery that depicts the battle would seem to delineate the site of a battlefield, as a certain strategic space in which the pharaoh could rule over his forces (the pharaoh commanding his charioteers from his royal chariot from the centre of the Egyptian line, with one wing of chariots on each side), this was rather the site of a ceremonial spectacle, the ritual display of force. The Greek practice of chariot fighting emerged from this heritage and became the epitome of the representation of *polemos*, as in the figure of Arēs riding in his chariot driven by the four immortal stallions.

Now, when, in Plato, this ancient iconography of war enters into the though form of the soul, a remarkable transformation seems to take place. In the ritual of chariot fighting, no particular attention seems to have been given to the activity of steering, since the sign of resemblance to be displayed was that of *arētē* affirming the kinship of being *philopolemos* to Arēs. As *arēios*, the issue of steering never arises in the hero. Like Arēs, the hero simply arrives, and his arrival is celebrated as a sign of the dreadful War-god. *Polemos* steers, which is to say that there is no moderation or mollification of forces, no duality to be harnessed. There is but the unitary, catatonic pull of the blazing fire of *kosmos* exhausting itself in man and animal. By contrast, in Plato, *arētē* must now be shown to be of the same nature as the self-restraining hold expressed in the virtue of *sōphrosynē*. *Polemos* must answer to the steering of *arkhē*, but since *polemos* is the perpetual strife of opposites, it can never correspond to mean or

moderation. Spiritual chariot fighting *per* Plato therefore becomes a matter of recurrent domination, because as long as man has *thumos* and *epithumia* – as long as man is alive and vigilant – these contrary forces pull him as he struggles to steer them by command. So, unlike the archaic idea of combat [*makhē*] as a temporally limited form of dreadful excess, happiness and bliss [*makaria*], there really can be no end to this struggle.

This is how idea of conquest now turns up in the discourse on *arētē*. Specifically, *arētē* will be linked to the idea of conquering [*nikēeis*] oneself by which man realises his potentialities for virtue. Remember that in the context of struggle and combat, archaic thought understands *arētē* as the excellence of man reaching his highest potential as *philopolemos*; it is the fleeting moment of *makhē* and *makaria* in which *hērōs* resembles god. In Plato, *arētē* is still what occurs in connection with *makhē*; in fact man is precisely called upon to seek out battle showing no cowardice, but not in the sense of the fleeting moment of heroic rage. *Arētē* is now what manifest itself over time. In fact, *arētē* does not appear before the battle is over and the opponent defeated, that is, in the state of conquest [*nikaō*] that follows. This is how, in the *Laws*, in the dialogue between the Athenian and Cleinias, *arētē* will come to resemble what had until then seemed a most unfamiliar offspring of *Arēs*, namely, the virtue of *sōphrosynē*:

A man has to fight and conquer his feelings of cowardice before he can achieve perfect courage; if he has no experience and training in that kind of struggle [*polemos*], he will never more than half realise his potentialities for virtue [*arētē*]. Isn't the same true of self-control [*sōphrosynē*]? Will he ever achieve a perfect mastery here without having fought and conquered [*diamemakhēmenos kai nenikēkōs*], with all the skills of speech and action both in word and play [*kai ergou kai tekhnēs*], the crowd of pleasures and desires [*hēdonais kai epithumias*] that stimulate him to act shamelessly and unjustly? (*Laws* 647: c-e).

Certainly, the sense of *arētē* expressed by Plato here has little relation to the archaic celebration of the deeds and acts of the singular *polemistēs*. When Plato speaks of *arētē* or, more exactly, the coming into being of *arētē* [*gignomai pros arētē*], he has in mind a sense of virtue most different from the ephemeral display of rage and spiritedness once discovered by the poet. *Arētē* has become

inscribed in the unmistakable resemblance of the mind to the strategic schema of the *stratia*. Just as the practice of *sōphrosynē* must govern the conduct of the *stratēgos* and the *stratiōtēs* to achieve conquest in battle, so the soul must observe this principle to arrive at the state of a certain soundness of mind [*sōphrōn*], having fought and conquered [*diamemakhēmenos kai nenikēkōs*] desire [*epithumia*] and spiritedness [*thumos*]. In both cases, *arētē* now expresses the kind of conduct that requires *sōphrōn* and is achieved through struggle and conquest. It is this state of soundness of mind Plato alludes to when – in a complete reversal of the archaic sense of *arētē* – he speaks of the resemblance of *arētē* and *sōphrosynē*. This is the site where the disciplines of the *stratia* and the *militia* will work their way into the mind and body of man in the perpetual struggle for domination over the unruly soul.

3.2. It is not difficult to see how the philosopher must have had a hard time convincing the *polemistēs*, as opposed to the *stratiōtēs*, of this new order of reality where *arētē* is *sōphrosynē*, where excellence is moderation. This seems attested to by the fact that Plato dedicated almost his entire treatise of the *Republic* to persuading Polemarchus [war leader] and his band of warriors of the truth of this unusual unification in which reality must be brought to adhere to form [*eidos*], which must then be imitated in the domain of the real. Indeed, it seems to bare witness to the difficulties early political thought encountered in the period in time where *polemos* steered both men and *kosmos*. For knowledge to escape the order of *polemos* and make new alliances with the world, for *polemos* to acquire an affinity and resemblance with moderation, the site of *polemos* had to be effaced in the world of sensible things, and moved into the ethereal plane of the soul. In the realm of imagination and speculative discourse, a nascent political psychology will then be able to discover the site of *polemos* as the strife of the soul, against which the practice of conquest must perpetually be mobilised constituting an irreducible circularity; the sound mind is at one and the same time what must occur at the end of the struggle, and that which cannot persist but from the continuous interventions of conquest. Therefore, the mind can never quite seem to agree with itself. The spiritual combat of man remains in a permanent state of entropy where the soul never seems to be able to finally

surrender to the sense of self prescribed by the early psychoanalyst to the war leader. Perhaps it is not so strange how Polemarchus seems portrayed as ignorant of such well-meaning concerns for the soul.

However, the first great displacement in which *arētē* loses its Orphic kinship and prophetic guise, did not come from Plato and the realm of speculative discourse. Rather, it seems to have emerged out of the *technē* of *polemos*, which appears at the intersection where the Spartan *militia* and *paideia* are joined in the practice of an *askēsis*. This *technē* then later seems to have been adopted by the Athenians after the Peloponnesian War, where it appears to have found its way into the kind of spiritual battle, where man begins to imitate the form [eidos] of a certain sense of self. Did the mind awaken on the battlefield, where ‘the iron hand shakes the dice box of chance’, to borrow an expression from Nietzsche? Perhaps, but maybe we should rather make the more modest claim that the mind is an invention that belongs to the birth of an order of things in which *arētē* no longer reads as a sign of the friendship of war, but rather of the workings of *paideia*; as that which is given from *askein* [exercise], *gymnasion* [bodily exercise], and *periodos* [marching round] bringing the body and soul into *apogumnazō* [hard exercise].

One thing in any case is certain. The mind belongs to a world where archaic *arētē* has come to be seen as a deviance from the *paideia*. When it appears among the young Greeks, it resembles infantile behaviour or lack of discipline [ataxia]. When it occurs in grown men, as in Herodotus’ account of Aristodemus, it is seen as vanity, stupidity, or error, the danger to which man exposes himself and his fellow warrior when he has not observed and learned the proper *paideia*. *Paideia* and *askēsis*, as opposed to rage and disorder, have come to form the coordinates for a *technē* of *polemos*. This vast displacement and restructuration is complete when the love and friendship found in the experience of being *philopolemos* have become inscribed in a most different chain of resemblances. When, in Classical Greece, Homer is sung to the young Greeks throughout their *paideia*, the friendship with war and the deeds and acts of the *hērōs* will have attained a sense of artifice and machination, which is how the scattered resemblances of love and friendship, having become dissociated

from the archaic experience of *menis* and *arētē*, turn up in the peculiar conjunction of love and exercise [philogumnasteō].

But at first, this is only true of the Spartiate male who devoted almost his entire life to military practice and service. In the Spartan hoplite we see the most clearly delineated expression of the peculiar resemblance of *askēsis* and the order that has come to govern the knowledge of *polemos* in the classical world. At around age seven, Spartan boys left their home (which essentially meant their mother and younger siblings) to go live among other boys in so-called herds [boua], which comprised the entry form of socialisation to an isolated community of men reminiscent of a kind of barracks or military school. Once in, the Spartan man never left the barracks to go live with his wife and children, and he remained on military call until the age of sixty. It is important to note that, at this point in time, the Spartan form of *paideia* clearly differed in several ways from that of most other city-states, as Xenophon explains in his account in the *Spartan Constitution* (2.2). The young Spartan boy was not put under the care of a *paidagōgos*, a tutor usually chosen among the slaves, as was common practice. Instead, the *boua* [herd] of boys was put under the command of the *paidonomos* [literally a shepherd or lawgiver of education] who was selected as a member of the class from which the highest offices of the *polis* were filled. In the *boua*, several boys from different households come under the permanent control and supervision of the *paidonomos*. Their multiplicity is dissolved as the individuals are reduced to bodies that can be kept under control by the *paidonomos* who had the authority to gather them together, to take charge of them, to lead and guide them in all matters of life and, if need be, to punish them. In the event that the *paidonomos* had to be absent, he divided his herd of boys into divisions, selected the keenest of his young prefects and gave to each the command of one division. And so, Xenophon tells us, ‘at Sparta the boys were never without a ruler’ (2.11). Of the actual *paideia*, as it was carried out by the *paidonomos*, Xenophon explains:

Instead of softening the boys' feet with sandals he required them to harden their feet by going without shoes. He believed that if this habit were cultivated it would enable them to climb hills more easily and descend steep inclines with less danger, and that a youth who had accustomed himself to go barefoot would leap

and jump and run more nimbly than a boy in sandals. And instead of letting them be pampered in the matter of clothing, he introduced the custom of wearing one garment throughout the year, believing that they would thus be better prepared to face changes of heat and cold. As to the food, he required the prefect to bring with him such a moderate amount of it that the boys would never suffer from repletion, and would know what it was to go with their hunger unsatisfied; for he believed that those who underwent this training would be better able to continue working on an empty stomach, if necessary, and would be capable of carrying on longer without extra food, if the word of command were given to do so: they would want fewer delicacies and would accommodate themselves more readily to anything put before them... He also thought that a diet which made their bodies slim would do more to increase their height than one that consisted of flesh-forming food. (2.3-6).

The result, says Xenophon, is that modesty and obedience [*aidōs*] are inseparable companions at Sparta. Now, it is important to note that the Spartan organisation constituted the exception to the rule well into the fourth century. Moreover, before the late fourth century there is actually little mentioning of hoplite training or any form of military exercise. In fact, even in Sparta, becoming a hoplite was not singled out as a certain discipline or practice of its own. On the contrary, it was simply an integral part of the *paideia*. The primary weapons of the hoplite, the long spear and the sword, were also used for hunting wild boars and other game, and so hunting was considered an excellent means of training young men into becoming warriors. War resembled hunting, and so good hunting skills were seen as a sign of similitude to martial excellence [*arētē*]. Hoplite training in other words occurred principally in the form of general exercises aimed at strengthening the body and the limbs rather than the learning of particular combat skills such as formation- and weapons-drills. The absence of a set of practices, which would separate out warfare as a singular activity, is furthermore attested to by fact that, at this point in time, weapons training was not organised in any regular or central form in the *polis*. In the late fifth century, the closest the Greeks would come to any form of formalised training with arms would be the private hiring of a so-called *hoplomachoi*, the martial equivalent of the Sophist tutor who would charge people for his services. The *hoplomachoi* gave exhibitions on the handling of spear, sword, and shield

using non-lethal weapons of their own design.⁵¹ Again, the employment of *hoplomachoi* seems to have constituted the exception to the rule. In fact, like the Sophist tutor, the *hoplomachoi* would often be ridiculed for his self-proclaimed wisdom and mocked for charging people to learn things that were as plain as a pikestaff.

But one should not mistake this suspiciousness of the *hoplomachoi* for a strictly pecuniary matter. In this suspiciousness or even hostility towards the drill sergeant of the ancient world we actually find the expression of the archaic kinship of man and war in which combat [makhē] has little to do with a *technē* or any practice one must attain through learning. As late as in Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*, we can still catch a glimpse of the old relationship with war, in particular, in his account of the common men. Here, we learn that men of common stature are seemingly unable to learn the military practices of the *stratia* such as the execution of formation-drill. However, it appears that this is not because of a general lack of fighting ability or uselessness in war. When encouraged to fight in the usual form of fluid combat, the common man seems to prove as able as any man. In Pheraulas, one of the Persian commoners, we learn how this is so. It is a method of fighting, Pheraulas says, that "... all men naturally understand, just as in the case of other creatures each understands some method of fighting which it has not learned from any other source than from instinct: for instance, the bull knows how to fight with his horns, the horse with his hoofs, the dog with his teeth, the boar with his tusks. And all know how to protect themselves, too, against that from which they most need protection, and that, too, though they have never gone to school or to any teacher." Pheraulas continues: "I have understood from my very childhood how to protect the spot where I thought I was likely to receive a blow; and if I had nothing else I put out my hands to hinder as well as I could the one who was trying to hit me... Furthermore, even when I was a little fellow I used to seize a sword wherever I saw one, although, I declare, I had never learned, except from instinct, even how to take hold of a sword... And, by Zeus, I used to hack with a sword everything that I could without being caught at it. For this was not only instinctive, like

⁵¹ For a description of the practices of the *hoplomachoi*, see Wheeler (1983: 227-228).

walking and running, but I thought it was fun in addition to its being natural.” (2.3.9-10).

As the passage suggests, the old friendship with war still exerts a certain influence if, in the classical world, it would mostly occur in the common man. This is not to say that the kind of military exercises of which Xenophon speaks were widely practiced among the aristocracy. In fact, by the time Plato writes the *Laws*, regular and centrally organised practices for war are almost unknown. Having suggested that “... each and every citizen must undertake military training in peace-time, and not leave it till war breaks out”, Plato hastens to add that: “... no such group training and competition is currently to be found in any *polis* at all, except on a very modest scale indeed.” (Laws (829b; 831b). With the exception of the Spartan army and few elite units, it seems military drill and exercise had no central structure, but took on a rather limited and scattered form. Again, this is also attested to in a passage of the *Laws*, where Plato appears to anticipate that his suggestion for the need of military exercise and preparation for battle in times of peace would seem especially strange to his audience. Such practices ‘may look silly to some people’, the Athenian says to Cleinias (830d) echoing what appears to have been a general sentiment in early classical Athens. Certainly, the first men outside of Sparta to take up the unusual and no doubt rudimentary practice of sham battles might have been easy victims of satire. This is also attested to in Xenophon’s anecdotes on Socrates. In a passage of *Memorabilia*, Xenophon has Socrates reflecting on the stark contrast between the Spartans and the apparently careless and even scorning Athenians in matters of training and military exercise: “... you see, in the army [stratiōtikos], where good conduct [sōphroneō, to be of sound mind], discipline [eutakteō, to show orderly behaviour], and submission are most necessary, our people pay no attention to these things... they not only neglect to make themselves fit, but mock at those who take the trouble to do so.” (3.5.21,15).

To the early fourth century Athenians, the practice of *eutakteō* [orderly behaviour], extolled as a cardinal virtue in the Spartan army, may have borne a stronger resemblance to comedy than the activity of a sound mind. In a passage, Thucydides tells us that even Pericles seems to have shared the common conviction not to practice for war. In fact, says Thucydides, he even went so far

as to praise the Athenians for taking it easy in their preparation for war, putting trust in ‘our own native courage’, Pericles said, rather than devoting themselves to hard exercise like the Spartans (2.39.1,4). Writing in the *Laws*, Plato seems well aware of this predicament and the difficulties that arise when the hopeless Athenians are to be educated in military matters, and so, mindful that the one who intends at a grand ideas had better start modestly, he suggested that “... a judicious *polis* must carry out a march, every month, for not less than one whole day, or more (according as the rulers decree), paying no heed to cold weather or hot.” (829b). However, in realising that such an idea might not easily be carried out, he devoted several passages of the *Laws* to discussing how the obstacles to correct military training could be overcome.⁵²

So, in essence, the practice for war and the division of war by means of an *askēsis* is really mostly a Spartan matter well into the fourth century. However, by the time classical thought reaches its zenith with Aristotle’s treatise on the political, this no longer appears to be the case. The obstacles Plato spoke of do not seem to be of any major concern. The Hellenic world has discovered the pathways to excellence and honour that run through *technē* and *paideia*. In a commentary on the Peloponnesian war, Aristotle says:

It is notorious that the Lacedaemonians themselves, while they alone were assiduous in their laborious drill, were superior to others, but now they are left behind by the rest both in athletic and military contests... Now they have rivals who compete with their education... (Politics 1338b 25-39).

3.3. So we learn in Aristotle how the exigencies of the Peloponnesian War seems to have carried the *technē* of *paideia* onto a new terrain on which the War,

⁵² In these passages, we learn that the first obstacle is the love of wealth [erōtos ploutou], which makes men unwilling to devote time to anything but their personal property: “This is what every citizen concentrates on with all his heart and soul; his ruling passion is his daily profit and he’s quite incapable of worrying about anything else.” In fact, the ‘insatiable desire for gold and silver’ occupies his soul to the extent that he “is willing to toil at every art and device, noble or ignoble, if he is likely to get rich by it, – willing, too, to perform actions both holy and unholy – no, utterly shameful – without a scruple, provided only that he is able to sate himself to repletion, like a beast, with all manner of foods and drinks and wenchings.” (831c-e). The second, however closely related, and, pace Plato, perhaps even more important cause can be referred to the problem of ‘non-constitutions’ or ‘non-polities’ – democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny: “For none of these is a polity, but the truest name for them all would be ‘state of faction’ [stasiōteia]; for none of them is a form of voluntary rule over willing subjects, but a voluntary rule over unwilling subjects...” (832c).

having made *paideia* worthy of belief, will affirm its solidity and provide proof of the proper order of war. But to return to the discourse of Thucydides and the question of truth and order, the War has yet to produce the tableau on which the proper order of war will be posited. As I said, in Thucydides, the question of truth [*alētheia*] is rather trying to get back to war, to acquire continuity with the new kinship of war and the world. In Thucydides, then, we learn not so much about the proper or the good or of how the soul, along with the order of things, ought to be shaped from struggle and war. *Alētheia* is not, as in Plato, a certain measure according to which reality must be brought to adhere to form [*eidos*]. As Thucydides explains, *historia* concerns *alētheia* in the sense of something that occurs over time. Within this temporally delineated space, *historia* is what discloses this truth as formations that have their conditions of possibility. Specifically, the discourse we find in Thucydides is trying to decipher *alētheia* in terms of the events that took place and became known as the Peloponnesian War; to disclose the war in its ‘truest preconditions’ [*alēthestatē prophasis*], as Thucydides says.

In tracing the course of these events, Thucydides can certainly speak of the Athenian or the Spartan quest for *hēgemonia* and *arkhē* in terms of *prophaseis* that made the war, but this is not the expression of the kind of causation which is derived from *eidos*. The relationship between *alētheia* and *prophasis*, or rather *prophaseis* since Thucydides lists several which I will not go into,⁵³ refers to the formation over time of a series of events bound to a thoroughly heterogeneous set of circumstances that have no privileged form. If we look at the mode of thinking employed by Thucydides, we can see how this is so. It appears Thucydides borrowed the term *prophasis* from the medical treatises of the Hippocratic tradition, where it occurs in the description of stages of a disease (Lebow 2003: 106-108). *Prophaseis* in other words attain the meaning of signs that appear over time, as in the outbreak of a disease, which is to say that it is close to the meaning of *diagnosis*. Moreover, Thucydides uses the term in two senses, where *prophasis* also occurs in the articulation of a kind of self-

⁵³ This work has been done elsewhere, see Lebow (2003).

justification, which is not necessarily of true intention.⁵⁴ In other words, we can see that *alētheia* refers to the state of war itself, to *polemos*, and the relationships of forces *historia* encounters in it over time. When Thucydides speaks of *alēthestatē prophasis*, then, what is at stake is certainly not the essentialist notion of ‘the real cause’ or ‘the one true cause’, as if things could be referred back to the site of the origin, where the truth of things corresponds to a truthful discourse. Rather, there are symptoms to be deciphered, symptoms that resemble stages of a disease, there are deceiving words and ignoble deeds, there is accident, error, and succession. It seems to me that what we see here is in other words the expression of the discerning gaze of the early historicist to whom *alētheia* cannot but refer to formations of truth that occur over time, and only so in a provisional way. By this I mean that *alētheia* belongs to *polemos*, and *historia* is the knowledge that recounts this relationship over time.⁵⁵

So, in the discourse of *historia* that has assumed the task of telling the truth about the new kinship of war and the world, we find the articulation of the resemblance of the outbreak of disease and the outbreak of war. But in what does this resemblance consist then? Certainly, it does not consist in the mere enumeration that heaps together by its own power of enchantment the 13.000 hoplites, the 16.000 others in various garrisons, the 1.200 cavalry, included mounted bowmen, and the 1.600 unmounted bowmen with the 300 triremes. But then what provides proof of the possibility of this juxtaposition so as to make the taxonomy of the *stratia* and the *militia* resemble signs of disease? That is, where do the gaze of the Hippocratic doctor, the long spear of the hoplite, the assemblage of man and animal of the cavalryman, the arrows of the bowman, and the ramming force of the trireme find their common locus? Well, the locus that makes this resemblance possible seems to concern *polemos* and time; it concerns the birth of a certain knowledge of war pertaining to a particular set of practices for intervening in the relationship of forces, a set of practices that ties

⁵⁴ Lebow explains: “A *prophasis* (rationalization) is essential to mask unacceptable motives. Herodotus reports that Miltiades sailed against Paros with a fleet of seventy ships because of a grievance he had against the Parians. Miltiades is careful to offer a *prophasis*: the Parians provided one ship to reinforce the Persians at Marathon. This ridiculous justification is necessary because Greeks did not level cities to settle personal scores.” (2003: 106).

⁵⁵ Following Foucault (2004: 173), we could also say that there is an indissociable circularity between the knowledge of history and the war it recounts and which at the same time goes on within it.

them together in assemblages of forces to form an economy of forces, one that once delivered the Greeks the glorious victory over the Persians, but also bound the Hellenes to a circuit of 'machination', to *machanoen*. What was once discovered on the battlefields of glory becomes the assault of *technē*, not in the sense of art or skill, but in the sense of a knowledge that, at the site where man and war come to change places, brings a certain practice of ruling and steering to bear on the relationships of forces entailing a complete reversal of the order of things. *Historia* is the account of these invasive forces, their accumulation, aggravation, overflow, and manifestation; like a plague, the outbreak of war unleashes the terrible forces that have accumulated and aggravated in the *technē* of steering *polemos*. So, in essence, what emerges then when *polemos* is brought out of the haze of oracular truth and exposed as an object of inquiry to be deciphered like a disease in its truest preconditions; what appears as war is discovered by *historia*? It seems to me that what we see emergent in this the first *historia* of the West is the entry of *polemos* into the realm of strategic calculations giving birth to what we could call the military model of war. This is the site on which *historia* will recount *alētheia* as the resemblance of war and disease. Once given birth to by the *technē* of steering, war – perhaps for the first time in human history – is discovered in its most disquieting effects:

The Peloponnesian War... not only lasted for a long time, but throughout its course brought with it unprecedented suffering for Hellas. Never before had so many cities been captured and then devastated, whether by foreign armies or by the Hellenic powers themselves (some of these cities, after capture, were resettled with new inhabitants); never had there been so many exiles; never such loss of life – both in the actual warfare and in internal revolutions. (Thucydides I.23: 3-10).

It is the scattering of the profound kinship of *polemos* by which man for a long time felt his existence carried along and whose force he felt in the very being of things. But it is also the return of what was once revealed to man in the poet's song, as the *hērōs* set forth into the unsaid, broke into the unthought, and compelled what had never happened. It is the return of the terrible, the *deinon*, as emergent from the exigencies of rage and spiritedness, set off by the capture

and usurpation of the friendship of war by the bond of the military model of war. It is these terrible forces that now turn up in this broken image of the world. This is no doubt a moment of truth in Western political thought, because it marks the threshold beyond which the relationship between the ruling principle and *alētheia* the tragedians were so much at pains to convey will gradually begin to fade. In Thucydides and the tragedians before him, we learn how terrible things seem to happen to man under the influence of *arkhē*, in particular, as it is inscribed in the relations of forces through *technē*. To these thinkers, it seems the pursuit of *hēgemonia* and mastery expresses the kind of hubris that destroyed the old world. In Plato and Aristotle, however, we will see that bad things happen to man precisely when the ruling principle [*arkhē*] is absent. This is when *phusis* will be imbued with a certain purpose and a certain end. Reality will no longer simply be what appears before man, since things no longer simply reveal themselves. As man becomes subject to the command of the ruling principle, reality is rather what must continually be reshaped, guided, and perfected in the image of form [*eidos*]. *Phusis* and all the beings that dwell in the bosom of the eldest of gods will acquire a certain *telos*; it will be found that there is mind in nature. Among those beings, man, the most gregarious of the animal species, will rise above the monarchy of *phusis* to discover how things and beings must find their proper ends within political community, as the realisation of life according to the good. It is classical politico-philosophical discourse emerging out of the exigencies of war to take charge of *polemos* in pursuit of the good. It can only do so, however, by declaring perpetual war from the outset. As the old horizon of war closes, a new emerges in the birth of the classical political model.

§ 4 *Politikon Zōon* – Threshold of Classical Politics

4.1. It has been argued that classical politics emerged out of a fundamental distinction between forms of life. In *Homo Sacer – Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben argues that the Greeks distinguished between two terms to express what we mean by the word ‘life’; “*zoē*, which expressed the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men or gods), and *bios*, which indicated the form or way of living proper to an individual or a group.” (1998: 1). This distinction between *zoē* and *bios*, Agamben says, is attested to in the celebrated passage of the *Politics*, in which Aristotle expresses the idea of life according to the good. According to Agamben, then, life in the classical world is distributed along two axes; ‘politically qualified life’ [*bios*] and ‘simple natural life’ [*zoē*] where the later is excluded from the *polis*, and remains confined “– as merely reproductive life – to the sphere of the *oikos*, home.” (Ibid. 2). The hidden paradigm of Western politics, Agamben tells us, the division of life into *bios* and *zoē* that has since lost its meaning and now occurs to us as especially strange, is the originary form the *exceptio* of sovereign power out of which life according to the good once emerged:

The peculiar phrase [in Aristotle] “born with regard to life, but existing essentially with regard to the good life” can be read not only as an implication of being born (*ginomenē*) in being (*ousa*), but also as an inclusive exclusion (an *exceptio*) of *zoē* in the *polis*, almost as if politics were the place in which life had to transform itself into good life and in which what had to be politicized were always already bare life. In Western politics, bare life has the peculiar privilege of being that whose exclusion founds the city of men (Ibid. 7).

According to Agamben, then, the city of men in the classical world was founded on the *exceptio* of ‘bare life’, which is to say, “... the inclusion of bare life in the political realm constitutes the original – if concealed – nucleus of sovereign power.” (Ibid. 6). From the earliest treatises of political theory,

Agamben argues, notably in Aristotle's opposition in the *Politics* of 'the simple fact of living' [to zēn] to 'politically qualified life' [to eu zēn], we find the delineation of the principle according to which sovereign power to some extent has always sought to govern life and the species existence through the reduction of life to 'bare life', situating life at the zone of indistinction between law and violence. In fact, Agamben contends, not only is 'bare life' that which founds the city of men in the *polis*, the 'structure of the exception' is 'consubstantial with Western politics'. A power over life has existed from the very inception of classical politics and persisted throughout Western political thought, Agamben claims, as he calls for the Foucaultian thesis of biopolitics to be corrected or at least completed: "... what characterizes modern politics is not so much the inclusion of *zoē* in the *polis* – which is, in itself, absolutely ancient – nor simply the fact that life as such becomes a principal object of the projections and calculations of State power. Instead the decisive fact is that, together with the process by which the exception everywhere becomes the rule, the realm of bare life – which is originally situated at the margins of the political order – gradually begins to coincide with the political realm, and exclusion and inclusion, outside and inside, *bios* and *zoē*, right and fact, enter into a zone of indistinction." (Ibid. 9).

Leaving aside for now the question of biopolitical modernity, as formulated by Foucault, it is useful to further examine the argument posited here by Agamben, since it will help establish some reference points for the present analysis. We are basically faced with the following hypothesis: the classical world unfolds on the terrain of the principle of sovereignty, initially expressed as an implicit power over life that functions by means of an inclusive exclusion, an *exceptio* of *zoē* in the *polis*, so as to transform life into good life. With Lacan, I have previously argued that, in *Antigone*, a certain displacement in the relationship of the ruler to *nomos* can indeed be identified. At the threshold to the classical world, we find the *arkhōn* passing over into a sphere beyond the *nomos* that existed in the archaic world, as he seeks to rule by command. Although seemingly the expression of the sovereign exception and the pursuit of the good (the promotion of the good of all as the law without limits), but as we traced this displacement in terms of the *logos* recounted by the poet we saw

how no such principle actually existed at this point in time. In fact, we are rather at the site of war where certain exigencies seem to carry off the *arkhōn* and displace the art of ruling within the governmental sphere of the *stratēgos*, opening up the terrain on which the old boundaries of authority would fade. Now, as we have effectively crossed the threshold to the classical period, will the principle of the sovereign law, the *exceptio*, finally be unveiled in the birth of the juridico-institutional model of power? Let us look at the evidence provided by Agamben, in particular, at the reference to Aristotle from whom he seems to derive the gist of his thesis.

The evidence provided by Agamben first and foremost seems to concern the particular passage in the *Politics* where Aristotle supposedly identifies the end of political community by opposing the ‘simple fact of living’ [zoē] to ‘politically qualified life’ [bios]. It is true that Agamben also mentions the famous passage of the same work, in which Aristotle articulates the idea of man as a *politikon zōon*, and he later draws on Pindar and Hesiod to speak of the sovereign law. I will return to Agamben’s reading of Pindar and Hesiod, but first I will comment on the analysis of Aristotle. Concerning Aristotle’s predication of man as a *politikon zōon*,⁵⁶ Agamben almost unitarily seems to direct his attention to the literal meaning that appears in the conjunction *politikon zōon*, which is commonly rendered in terms of man being ‘an animal with the additional capacity for political existence’. According to Agamben, then, what is at issue is this ‘additional capacity’ of man tied to language, which compels man, as opposed to the mere animal, to seek out “... the relation between *phonē* and *logos*.” (Ibid. 7). This is how the *politikon zōon* expresses the implicit exclusion of the ‘bare life’ [zoē] of the animal, as it appears at the threshold of political life delimited by the transition from voice to language.

The *politikon zōon* is in other words basically seen as a linguistic problem that appears to have little or no historical reality. Strangely enough, Agamben in fact never dwells on the actual text of the passage in which Aristotle provides his account of man. Political man seems to be understood as a mere ontological fact derived from linguistics. I have previously noted how, in the classical world, resemblance is still the primary form of knowledge, which is how one should

⁵⁶ In Aristotle, arguments take the form of predication rather than definition (Lewis 1991).

suspect that Aristotle might have something to say about the sense of ‘politically qualified life’ in this passage, other than the simple finding of the form of politiccity being tied to language.⁵⁷ In fact, having explained how life according to the good is the end of political community, only a few lines later of the *Politics* – in a passage that was to become canonical to Western political thought – Aristotle expresses most clearly the sense of being a political animal, not by recourse to the distinction between *bios* and *zoē*, man and animal, but to a quite different idea. Specifically, in this passage Aristotle alludes to the idea of *sōphrosynē*, which neither concerns the question of life nor a specific difference that determines the genus *zōon*. Rather, as we have touched upon in the preceding pages, it concerns the problem of the government of self.

This passage of the *Politics*, which often posits in political theory as the originary ground of the political, rarely seems to have been discussed in its entirety. In fact, certain formulations even appear to have been overlooked, dismissed as unimportant, and perhaps even set aside as too obscure to merit serious attention, not only by Agamben, but seemingly also in much of the literature as attested to in the modern rendering of the text. Here is the passage from the *Politics* in the translation of Richard McKeon:

Hence it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity; he is like the

“Tribeless, lawless, hearthless one,”

whom Homer denounces – the natural outcast is forthwith a lover of war; he may be compared to an isolated piece at draughts. (1253a: 1-6).

Certainly, Aristotle’s account of man seems strangely peculiar as rendered by means of our modern language, withdrawn as it necessarily is from the vicissitudes of history. Clearly, it seems difficult to imagine how ‘the natural outcast’ who is forthwith ‘a lover of war’ could have any importance to the sense

⁵⁷ The absence of such an inquiry in Agamben is all the more remarkable since he actually notices the resemblance between the political community and its inhabitant, the *politikon zōon*, as expressed in the politiccity tied to language (Agamben 1998: 3).

of being a *politikon zōon*, let alone that of political community. But while it might appear as a negligible idiosyncrasy in Aristotle's text, it seems beyond doubt that the *politikon zōon* – and thus by resemblance what Aristotle saw as the *telos* of political community – is distinguished from this figure who seems to come across as particularly troublesome in being 'a lover of war'. It would therefore not be true to the discourse of Aristotle to simply dismiss or ignore the passage.

Advocates of the thesis of the exception might see themselves vindicated here, since it appears as if a form of exclusion is indeed at stake in Aristotle. But while it seems reasonable to claim that some form of exclusivity is at stake in the sense that certain forces cannot exist within political community, the *politikon zōon* is clearly not opposed to the empty category of 'bare life'. Conversely, the sense of being a political animal is obviously not a simple linguistic matter. In short, it would not be true to the historical reality of the classical period to see in this articulation the division between forms of life, as expressed in the sovereign exception. Therefore, if we are to understand the discourse that once articulated a certain caesura with the 'founding of the city of men', we must show a more acute sensitivity to the subtleties of Aristotle's text. Here is the original Greek text of the passage in the *Politics* (1253a: 1-6):

Ek toutōn oun phaneron hoti tōn phusei hē polis esti, kai hoti ho anthrōpos phusei politikon zōon, kai ho apolis dia phusin kai ou dia tukhēn ētoi paulos estin, ē kreittōn ē anthrōpos: hōsper kai ho huph' Homērou loidorētheis

“aphrētōr athemistos anestios”:

hama gar phusei toioutos kai polemou epithumētēs, hate per azux ōn hōsper en pettois.

I am not going to suggest reading the passage in Greek, since, like Foucault, I am neither a Hellenist nor a Latinist. In stead, I would like to draw attention to some key terms by means of which we can attempt at establishing the logical space in which Aristotle's text is rendered intelligible. We can see that Aristotle expresses the idea of the *politikon zōon* by drawing a distinction between political man and a specific politico-historical identity that cannot be explained by the crude division of life into *zoē* and *bios*, man and animal. Clearly, Aristotle

does not classify this figure as a mere animal in the sense of having no language and no ability to seek out the relation between *phonē* and *logos*, as we would expect from Agamben's thesis. On the contrary, Aristotle distinguishes his *politikon zōon* from the strange figure who, according to nature [*kata phusin*], is without a *polis* [*apolis*].

While the identity of this figure may seem obscure or even enigmatic, a careful rendering of the passage reveals a clue that might allow us to inquire into the actual meaning of this distinction. We have previously encountered the theme of the one who is *apolis* in *Antigone*, in particular, where it appears in close proximity with the term *autonomos* to describe the one who, in her 'self-willed impulses', makes her own law. Aristotle certainly speaks of his figure as lawless [*athemistos*], so it seems a viable first approximation to suspect a certain resemblance. Yet the context in which Aristotle employs the term seems to suggest that a different meaning and a different set of circumstances might be at stake. What we must pay attention to is Aristotle's conjunction *polemou epithumētēs*, which forms a very specific meaning far removed from what the modern rendering of the text suggests (he is forthwith a lover of war). *Polemou epithumētēs* certainly concerns a matter of affect and war involving a particular mode of conduct, but the actual sense of this conjunction must be resolved in terms of the semantics of the actual classical Greek categories.

In the previous chapter, I explained how, in Plato, we often find the metaphor for man's ruling of his soul expressed in the composite nature of a pair of winged horses and a charioteer, where one horse is of noble breed, the other ignoble. In this resemblance of the tripartite soul and the chariot driver, we find the soul in a state of perpetual war struggling by means of *nous* [mind] to steer the forces of *thumos* [spiritedness] and *epithumia* [desire]. Now, it seems to me that this resemblance in fact has a certain affinity with the Aristotelian distinction between the *politikon zōon* and the man who is *polemou epithumētēs*. The word *epithumētos* is the adjective form of the Greek notion of *epithumia* [desire, yearning], whereas *polemou* is the adverbial form of *polemos*. A more accurate rendering of *polemou epithumētēs* would then seem to be "he is yearning for war" or "he has a desire for war", and yet, if we take into account the Platonic model of the soul wherein the *nous* is given the double role of

consolation and imperative, as that which can and must rule over *epithumia*, then the more correct rendition, though it is difficult to convey this expression accurately, would seem to be “his desire is ruled by war”. This seems to suggest that Aristotle distinguishes the *politikon zōon* in terms of man being able to rule over his soul, which is to say that the sense of being a political animal in Aristotle might resemble Plato’s concern for the proper ruling of the soul. However, to affirm such a hypothesis, it is clearly necessary to further inquire into the relationship in Aristotle between ‘political man’ and his ‘double’; who is this peculiar being whose ‘desire is ruled by war’ and who seems to be either above man belonging to the divine sphere of gods or below man and the mundane sphere of the city of men?

While the description of this curious figure that dwells either among gods or outside the city walls might bring to mind the image of the erudite philosopher’s ironic disputation over the primitive man, Aristotle’s words contain neither ambiguity nor irony, at least in this sense. Aristotle’s representation of this apparently eccentric creature that has no *polis* and no sound virtue, but on the contrary appears to have an affect for war, is not to be confused with the figure of the primitive or savage man *per se*. In the discourse of Aristotle, even the savage man, according to nature, belongs to a collective in the form of a tribe. Aristotle, however, says that this man is specifically without a tribe or clan [aphrētōr] as well as lawless [athemistos]. However, this should not be misunderstood in the sense that this man is *de facto* banned from the *polis*. Aristotle’s treatise on the political is not a juridical stipulation of *nomos*. It is not written in the codes of law. It is precisely what it says it is – a *political* discourse – in the most fundamental sense of the term.

In other words, what is at stake in Aristotle is precisely the practice of politics in the sense of a certain strategic manoeuvre targeted against a specific individual relationship. Specifically, what Aristotle has in mind is a particular of form conduct – a specific mode of being – which can be explicated by examining the reference to Homer. Aristotle refers to a passage of the *Iliad* in which Diomedes, the Achaean *hērōs* descending directly from Heracles, opposes his fellow Achaean king, Agamemnon, who at this stage of the siege of Troy proposes a retreat. Bristling with rage and spiritedness, Diomedes encourages

the Achaeans to stay and fight, as he appeals to the warriors' sense of *arētē*. The crowd of warriors applauds Diomedes while the tension starts to rise. At this point, Nestor, the wise old Achaean king who is often portrayed in the role of giving advice to young warriors as well as council to the kings, intervenes. Nestor speaks out to the crowd and declares: "A clanless, lawless, hearthless man is the person that loves war [polemou eratai] among his own folk." (Iliad: 9.64).

This is the passage Aristotle refers to in the passage of the *Politics*. As we know, in the *Iliad*, Nestor's diplomatic skills are deployed throughout the epos to bring reconciliation among the Achaeans, most importantly in the relationship between the *hērōs* and demigod Achilles and Agamemnon. But Nestor, the wise old man, always seems, if only slightly, to give the power to one side in the struggle, namely, to the *arkhōn* who favours moderation over excellence, *sōphrosynē* over archaic *arētē*. Nestor, in other words, functions in the role of the mediator who, by neutralising the forces of *polemos* in favour of moderation, reunites the bond among the Achaeans. That is, the bond which, as classical political discourse overlays the archaic Greek oratory tradition, is transformed into the principle of steering the *stratia* and the *militia*, the bond which enables the *arkhōn* to be *kubernōmenon* [the one who steers], as we learned in Plato. It is important to note, however, that this bond, issuing from the government of self, is not yet in existence in Homer. This is in fact where Nestor comes in. Homer cannot do without the figure of Nestor if the Achaeans are to retain some form of unity, because at this point in time there is no mind to take charge of the unruly soul and make it submit to the steering of the *arkhōn*, *hēgemon*, or *stratēgos*. Nor is there a mind present to apprehend the lines of escape and pursuit. As we know, the Homeric *hērōs* moves within a world without boundaries, a world written in the codes of *polemos* where it seems the *hērōs* does not have a sense of self one can appeal to.

So, as Nestor tries to induce a sense of moderation in the crowd of the young warriors, he expresses the strategic incitement, which is absent in the warrior who has yet to learn the value of the military model of war, both on the actual battlefield and in the soul. In fact, archaic thought does not really know the classical virtue of *sōphrosynē*, nor does it seem to value the kind of

government of self that classical thought installs in the virtue of *arētē*. The *hērōs* knows no moderation or sense of reflective inwardness, but on the contrary demonstrates an astounding inability to steer the affects through strategic calculations, and therein, in the blazing fire of the pure, catatonic rupture, divinity springs forth. The deeds and acts of the *hērōs* are born, not from the calculated activities of *nous*, but from rage and spiritedness that find their attunement [harmonia] in the steering by *polemos* of *kosmos*. These are the 'Apollonian' virtues and values celebrated by Homer, as the poet sings of the one who is *philopolemos*, even if the figure of Nestor is invented to instil some old wisdom in the young souls.

Now, by the time the order of *polemos* is displaced by classical discourse around the time of the Peloponnesian War, we saw how tragedy rediscovers the profound sense of being *philopolemos*, so far removed from the mere life of the city of men, as madness and illusion. The archaic hero is seen as the disordered player of the Same and the Other, the dangerous individual who, in violating the ruling principle, makes his own law [autonomos] and so becomes without a *polis* [apolis]. It is basically the same theme we see in Aristotle when he speaks of the one whose desire is ruled by war [polemou epithumētēs]. The one who is *polemou epithumētēs* is *apolis*, Aristotle says, which is precisely how, in the discourse of Aristotle, Diomedes is 'banned' as the betrayer of the bond and the pact, the bond which makes political man and political community possible.

But how is this displacement achieved in the discourse of Aristotle? Remember that, in Homer, Diomedes is honoured with the highest praise throughout the epos being only second among the Achaean warriors in fighting skill and virtue to Achilles. Let us try to analyse the steps apparent in Aristotle's rhetorical strategy. First Aristotle cites Nestor to speak the discourse of the mediator and seemingly neutral subject. From this vantage point, he animates the *telos* of mind, which remains absent in Diomedes and the warriors, as he assumes the intrinsically strategic role of being *kubernōmenon*. This is the first strike of the politico-strategic mind against the dreadful opponent conjured up from the old world to be defeated in the present. As we reread the passage, we discover the second affront doled out by the philosopher. Comparing the two texts, we can see that Aristotle seems to slightly alter the original Homeric text.

In Homer, the passage reads '*polemou eratai*', in which love and war appear in the intimate relationship of being *philopolemos*. In Aristotle, however, the passage is slightly altered in a play of words to read '*polemou epithumētēs*' attaining the distinctly ridiculous sense of Diomedes being a slave of his passions and ruled by war. It is the theatrical play of power and the return of masks. One should not forget how the old order was laughed away by the tragedians, as the virtues of the archaic *hērōs* are reversed, put on a pedestal, and displayed in their delusional intensities at the Athenian theatre of Dionysus.

The reference to Homer is in other words hardly idiosyncratic. Nor is Aristotle's slight alteration the expression of a simple forgetfulness. When Aristotle draws on this allusion to the Homeric poems in his articulation of the *politikon zōon*, and this is the third affront, he invokes the entire order governing Greek mythology in order to turn it on its head, as he re-forges the discourse of Nestor into a weapon. By slightly altering the Homeric text, Aristotle proclaims the sense of being a *politikon zōon*, not only by drawing a linguistic distinction between man and animal, but by finishing off the chimera of the *polemistēs* of ancient mythologeme, in a manner not so different from the Socratic dialectician or the battlefield *stratēgos*. The veritable antithesis to being political in the Aristotelian sense, the one who is *philopolemos* in the one who brings a fury to bear on the relations of forces even among his own folk; he is the dangerous individual who adheres to no political order, since his fleeting order of self answers to no command by any *basileus*, *hēgemon*, *arkhōn*, or *stratēgos*, which is why he should be considered, Aristotle says, 'as an isolated piece at draughts' [hate per azux ōn hōsper en pettois].

This is how, as we examine the Homeric reference further, we can see that Aristotle is indeed most concerned with the disruptive forces of the *polemistēs*. Not only does the absence of the virtues of the sound mind, such as good conduct [*sōphroneō*], discipline [*eutakteō*], modesty, and obedience [*aidōs*], make it impossible to command this figure like a piece at draughts, in fact such form of conduct seems to upset the ruling principle [*arkhē*] itself. Not in the sense that Aristotle appears to be particularly preoccupied with blocking the warpath of Diomedes targeting the Trojans. The conviction of Diomedes to fight the Trojans is not the cause of the intervention. The point in the *Iliad* where

Nestor intervenes, which is the passage Aristotle cites, is the specific moment when the speech of Diomedes is threatening to plunge the Achaeans into what seems to materialise as a form of internal struggle, a war among the Achaeans themselves. What occupies Aristotle, then, is not to contain the force of the warrior targeting the Trojans, but rather to contain the war that threatens to appear on the inside with its alarming consequences; the blurring of the distinction between friend and enemy and the collapsing of the assemblage of Achaean forces into the disorganised mass of individual *polemistēs*, the heterogeneous dispersion of the relations of forces where no form of steering or command is possible. So, whereas to the modern mind Diomedes might appear to be ‘longing for war’ in his conviction to fight the Trojans, it would not be accurate to read in Aristotle a particular preoccupation with what is essentially of little importance to the significance of being a political animal. The disquieting effects of the warrior lie not in his force targeting the opponent, for this is also the aim of the assemblage of forces of the *stratia* in which the *stratiōtēs* is subjected to the ruling of the *stratēgos*. The disquieting effects of the figure of the archaic *polemistēs* – as distinct from the classical *stratiōtēs* – lie precisely in the disruptive effects of *arētē*, *menis*, and *thumos* stirring up the forces of *polemos* in the soul, and this is precisely what Aristotle seeks to eliminate in his representation of political man.⁵⁸

Clearly, then, we cannot posit the Aristotelian sense of being an animal with the capacity for political existence in the historico-politically empty space of an opposition to *zoē*. But is the *politikon zōon* not precisely the expression of a certain form of ‘politically qualified life’? Surely the division into forms of life must have had some degree of actuality in the domain of appearance in the classical world. Quite the contrary, it seems, for such a distinction would not have been particularly meaningful to the Greeks all the while that *zoē* was not perceived in terms of an exception, but as ‘normality’ in the sense of expressing

⁵⁸ In fact, the problem of *polemos* among the citizens of the *polis*, or what we could call the public sphere, appears as a central theme in classical discourse, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

nothing but the simple fact of living common to all living beings.⁵⁹ Contrary to the convictions of Agamben, *zoē* is not what distinguishes the ruling of the *oikos* by the *oikonomos* [the head of an estate] and the *despotēs* [the head of the family] from the practice of political life [*bios politikos*]. As we learn in book II of the *Politics* (1261a), where Aristotle interrogates Socrates' suggestion in the *Republic* for men to have common property of the households of the *polis* and all that belong to them, women, children, and slaves, the *oikos* and the ruling by the *oikonomos* do not demarcate a sphere of 'simple natural life', *zoē*. The boundary that appears at the site of the *oikos* is simply that of private property.

Accordingly, when Aristotle distinguishes the practice of politics from that of ruling by the *oikonomos* and the *despotēs* at the beginning of the *Politics*, what he has in mind is clearly not to separate out *zoē* from politics. Rather, it is simply to differentiate among the practices that dispose differently over things in the public and the private domains. In each case, *zoē* is never absent simply because it is what animates life. *Zoē* does not just dwell in the *oikos* or at the margins of political order, but in fact everywhere in the *polis*. *Zoē*, therefore, never appears at the site of exclusion. It is simply not true to the discourse of Aristotle to try to make the notion of the *politikon zōon* fit the distinction of what was never an inclusive exclusion of the animal in man, since both the bodily endowment of the former, *zoē*, and the spiritual endowment of the latter, dwell in both beings. Most importantly, in the world of classical Greece, *zoē* is not recognised in terms of identity and difference, but rather in terms of resemblance. At this point in time, the life of man, animal, and nature are not really seen as distinct forms of life. Rather, there are degrees of difference, which, however, are bound to the chain of resemblances. As Aristotle says in the *Politics*, "... man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals..." (1253a 8). This is to say that life, first and foremost, appears to man as signs that bare the markings of resemblance: "... there is Mind [*nous*] in nature, just as in animals, and... this is the cause of all order and arrangement," Aristotle says in the

⁵⁹ As pointed out by Ernesto Laclau: "[In Classical GreeceClassical GreeceClassical Greece] living beings are not distributed between two categories – those who have exclusively *bios* and those who have exclusively *zoē* – for those who have *bios* obviously have *zoē* as well." (2007: 17).

Metaphysics (984b 15-19) affirming the fact that life in the classical world is recognised much more in the form of resemblance than difference.

It seems to me, then, that we should abandon the distinction between *bios* and *zoē* and instead try to think of the *politikon zōon* as a figure who bares witness, not to the idea that a certain new species has been born, but rather to the fact that a particular mode of self-relationship has now emerged at the site of the *bios politikos*. This sense of self-relationship does not emerge out of a fundamental distinction between man and animal, as if man, having uttered his last animal cries, suddenly appears out of the jungle to seek out the relation between *phonē* and *logos*. Rather, what could perhaps be described as the reflective inwardness of a self refers to degrees of difference that separates the kind of animal who is capable of ruling over his soul from the one who is seemingly incapable of mastering himself and thus anyone else. This is also to say that the idea of self-control [*sōphrosynē*], Aristotle seems to allude in his predication of man, concerns a matter of degrees of resemblance; the soundness of mind [*sōphroneō*] does not concern an *exceptio* of life or a specific difference that determines the genus *zōon*. On the contrary, it concerns the resemblance of man and nature found in the *nous* [mind], as ‘the cause of all order and arrangement’.

If we dismiss the terms *bios* and *zoē* as meaningful descriptors of man, the question that remains though is whether the specific distinction in Aristotle between the *politikon zōon* and the one whose desire is ruled by war, nonetheless, can meaningfully be understood as an *exceptio* in the *polis*. After all, Aristotle speaks of the later in terms of being *apolis* and without a tribe or clan as well as lawless. This would require that Aristotle’s distinction in fact expresses the bond between sovereign power and life through which the original political relation takes the form of the ban (the state of exception as the zone of indistinction between inside and outside, exclusion and inclusion).⁶⁰ While clearly the expression of a certain sense of governmental reason, the denouncement by Aristotle of the man who is *polemou epithumētēs* in favour of the *politikon zōon* is not the expression of the sovereign ban. Remember, for

⁶⁰ Still, we would merely be saying something at the level of discourse rather than at the level of actual practices.

instance, that the Cynics referred to themselves as *apolis* and yet they lived among the citizens of the *polis*. While Aristotle does not seem to have been targeting the Cynics in this passage of the *Politics*, for the simple reason that they perfected the ascetic ideal of self-mastery, this is just to say that we really find no traces of the juridico-institutional model in Aristotle's account of man.

One should also keep in mind that in this period, and up until the end of the Renaissance, sovereignty is not understood in terms of an institution belonging to the state. The *nomos basileus* has nothing to do with the juridico-institutional model of power. By contrast, sovereignty is recognised in terms of the mark of superiority or as the sign of divine origin ascribed to individuals; marks and signs that are known and disseminated by resemblance and analogy (Bartelson 1995: 138). So, while Aristotle's account of the one whose desire is ruled by war certainly seems to refer to a 'naked' individual, dispossessed of any kind of collective identity and seemingly reduced to 'bare life', this should not be confused with a *de facto* dispossession, the outcast of the *polemistēs* from the *polis*. What is at stake here is not the sovereign ban, but closer to what we could call the political play of power in the most fundamental sense of the mutual ban; the opposition of two claims to law and authority, which, as Ernesto Laclau says (2007: 15), is precisely the constitutive nature of any radical antagonism or, as the Greeks would say, *polemos*.

This is not to say that the non-reciprocal ban has no existence in classical Greece. Often it would occur in the form of the common practice of exiling, as in the famous examples of Thucydides and Kleisthenes, both of whom, however, were simply exiled rather than killed. Moreover, the practice of exiling cannot be understood as indicative of the non-reciprocal ban, seen as a generalised technique employed by power in its reference to life, simply because the form in which power manifests itself in the classical world has little to do with the juridical model of power, and more to do with the disciplines of an *askēsis* and the government of self. In fact, we could even say that the idea of power, in the sense of an abstract group of institutions or techniques of government by which a state assures the subservience of its citizens, has yet to emerge. It is therefore no coincidence that Agamben seems to have a hard time speaking of the actual sense of the particular kind of conduct, which supposedly is subject to sovereign

power.⁶¹ Agamben certainly refers to actual figures as bearers of so-called 'bare life', such as the Roman figure of the sacred man [homo sacer], the bandit, and the werewolf (as threshold of indeterminacy between man and animal), but these are all more recent figures that have no existence in classical Greece. In the world of classical Greece, it appears, there are no referent object(s) of the ban to be found anywhere but in the empty, ahistorical category of 'bare life'.⁶²

So, at this point in time, the juridical model of power has yet to be invested in the relations of forces as a political idea of order. In fact, this will not happen before the invention of Roman law. We are at the threshold where the relations of forces have come to find an expression in the military model of war and yet still refer back to *polemos*. It is in this sense we must understand the discourse of Aristotle. The discourse on the one who is *apolis* does not concern the question of the sovereign ban. It concerns a certain bond that constitutes the condition of possibility of ruling and hence the order of political community. As we have seen, what is at stake here is the bond of the *stratia* in which the government of self makes possible the government of others. It is the bond that issues from the practices of an *askēsis* and its correlatives, discipline [eutakteō], moderation and self-control [sōphrosynē] – all the signs that bare the markings of the set of resemblances articulated in the sound mind [sōphroneō]. But are these practices not precisely the expression of the division of life or in what exactly does this bond consist? It consists, not in the division of life by sovereign power, but in the resemblance according to which there is mind [nous] in nature, animals, and men. Hence the formulation 'man is by nature a *politikon zōon*'. There is mind in nature and all that belongs to it, because the ruling principle

⁶¹ In fact, it is not until the second last page of the book that the meaning of *zoē* is even vaguely qualified other than the sense of 'reproductive life' we learn of in the first few pages of the book. At the end of the study, Agamben says that *zoē* concerns the private life of 'man as a simple living being at home in the house', as opposed to the political existence of man in the *polis* (Agamben 1998: 187).

⁶² Hence the problem which however by now should seem of strictly academical value: Must we understand the nature of the exclusion of 'bare life' as a ban on public reproduction, perhaps as a peculiar variant of the Lévi-Straussian 'ban on incest', or should we see it as a confinement of the relations of forces that appear in the mere absence of what is deemed to be political life, so as to give life in the *oikos* a privileged form? In case of the former, it seems to remain unclear what relation, if any, actually exists between the Classical Greek sense of *zoē* and the Roman notion of the *vita* of *homo sacer*. In case of the later, the exclusion of *zoē* would correspond to the veritable site of social indeterminacy leaving power with no pivotal point within the relations of forces to separate life from politics.

found in the *arkhē* of *kosmos* permeates everything. As Aristotle explains in the *Politics*, the *arkhē* is the principle of ruling and subject element, which ‘comes to light in all things’: “Such a duality exists in living creatures, but not in them only; it originates in the constitution of the *kosmos*; even in things which have no life there is a ruling principle, as in a musical mode.” (*Politics* 1254a: 31-34). This is how, in nature and in animals such as man, the ruling element of *nous* governs the soul and body in which it dwells. This is what Aristotle has in mind, not only when he speaks of *zoē*, but also of life in the sense of the proper way of living to an individual or a group [*bios*]. In fact, this is precisely how the one whose desire is ruled by war turns up at the site of the wholly unnatural. The chimera of Diomedes appears on the other side of order, not because he is banned, but because he has no mind in the Aristotelian sense and therefore is without tribe, clan, and *polis*. The *arkhē* permeates both the sphere of the *oikos* and the site of the *bios politikos*. The *arkhē* knows no separation between *bios* and *zoē*, man and animal, *nomos* and *physis*; in the life of the *despotēs*, the *oikonomos*, the *politēs*, and the *stratēgos*, *bios* and *zoē* are collapsed in the resemblance of *nous* to the *arkhē*.

4.2. However, it is no doubt an intricate path that has now led classical thought to the discovery of the bond of resemblance between the mind and the steering of *kosmos*. Indeed, it is necessary to return to the archaic period in order to trace this genealogy. This will allow us to determine the line of flight in which the idea of steering, at the point of intersection where the mind comes to mirror the one God, will be connected to the ruling principle. In turn, it will enable us to understand how the relationships of forces in the classical world, rather than issuing from the juridical model of power, for a long time actually found their expression in a war and conquest, as the disciplinary practices of the nascent mind articulate the pathways to political community in the elaboration of a self. Finally, this will allow us to move beyond the thesis of Agamben and perhaps enable us to say something new about the Foucaultian thesis of biopolitics. In any case, this trajectory of thought takes us back to one of the most profound moments of the history of the Western *epistēmē* where the first great speculation about order and the steering of *kosmos* begins. Thought finds itself faced with the stark fact that there exists, below the level of spontaneous

orders, things that are in themselves capable of being ordered, things that belong to a certain unspoken order; the fact that, in short, order *exists*. But it is also a moment of true irony. Once again, we are confronted with the comforting yet disconcerting possibility that perhaps the mind was born in an altogether reflective manner – from war [*polemos*]. As man occurs at the middle ground between being and thinking, *polemos* and *logos*, the order of war reflects back on the reflection upon order itself as the activity of thought itself. Order will illuminate in the gathering [*logos*] of *kosmos* in man. As father and king of all, *polemos* will give birth, not only to god and man, the slave and the free, but also to the wise man and the ignorant. However, as the illuminated outline of *kosmos* is apprehended enlightening the soul, that is, as *polemos* becomes capable of being thought [*logikoi*], thought must answer to the apprehension of its own gathering [*logos*].

“Although this *Logos* exists for ever”, Heraclitus says in fragment one, “men prove as unable to understand it when once they have heard it as before they heard it. For, though all things come to pass in accordance with this *Logos*, men seem as if ignorant when they experience such words and things...” All things come into being by way of strife and man is forever engaged in strife and struggle, but men do not grasp this *Logos*. In fact, the *Logos* of *polemos* is something so difficult to apprehend that it can neither be acquired by learning [*polymathie*] nor is it something that can easily be disseminated.⁶³ It is not even possible to know *polemos* from the teachings of *philosophia*, we learn in Heraclitus. It cannot be taught. Moreover, *polemos* cannot be made the object of scientific knowledge [*epistēmē*]. But this is not because *polemos* stands outside of *epistēmē*. It is for the reason that underneath the amassed knowledge of words and things, it speaks another language, without words or discourse, the language in which the *kosmos* sings to man in the vibrating tension of signs that bare the markings of *polemos*. So life [*bios*] is the name of the bow being bent around itself by the force of the string,⁶⁴ and so *bios*, this immanent tug-of-war

⁶³ “Much learning (*polymathie*) does not teach sense. Otherwise it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, or again Xenophanes and Hecataeus.” (Heraclitus fr. 40).

⁶⁴ The Homeric name for bow is *bios*.

whose name is life but whose work is death,⁶⁵ will pass on the *Logos* to the one who will grasp its incisive arrows: "I have many swift arrows in the quiver under my arm, arrows that speak to the initiated", says Pindar in the *Olympian Odes* (Olympian Odes II: 84-85).⁶⁶

The *Logos* is in other words what strikes one, as it appears in man who does not consider himself as the source of his own thought. In the attempt of approaching the sense of this mode of thinking, we could perhaps liken it to when we today try to recapture a certain course of event or a trajectory of thought in which case we might lose sight of our own share, and ask ourselves: how did this happen or how did this thought come to me? If we take the sense of this wonderment and apply the kind of slithering surface to words and things that remain in the unceasing state of being carried off by war we come fairly close to the mode of thinking of the Pre-socratics. Words and things literalities arrive in the soul; they are part of the single great text of *kosmos* that travels as much with the timbre of sound as through the unspoken pathways of order – the *Logos* comes to man: "Listen not to me but to the *Logos*", Heraclitus says in fragment 50. But must one simply listen and hope for the *Logos* to arrive or how can one hope to be initiated in this *Logos* that cannot be learned from teaching, in fact, not even from the master himself?

The profound kinship of man and *kosmos* will be revealed if man, listening to the *Logos*, goes 'looking for himself',⁶⁷ probing within himself. The *Logos*, according to which all things come to pass, can be grasped, but only when man follows no one. One must abandon all the false appraisals, the stubborn heredities, and the manifold atavisms in which one is inscribed and instead go looking for oneself, retreating into this self. Only then will man know the *Logos* of *polemos* or, rather, will *polemos* reveal to man the truth [alētheia] of the order that governs all things.⁶⁸ *Polemos* makes the inner law of things be known to

⁶⁵ "The bow's name is life, though its work is death." (Heraclitus fr. 48).

⁶⁶ Having explained how this form of knowledge will only speak to the initiated, Pindar continues: "The man who knows a great deal by nature is truly skillful, while those who have only learned chatter with raucous and indiscriminate tongues in vain like crows against the divine bird of Zeus." (Olympian Odes II: 85-86).

⁶⁷ "I searched myself", Heraclitus says in fr. 101. The expression *edizēsamēn emeōuton* literally means 'I went looking for myself'.

⁶⁸ "Nature loves to conceal itself." (Heraclitus fr. 123).

man, the inner law that permeates everything [panta]. To know *polemos* “... is to know the thought by which all things are steered through all things [ekubernese panta dia panton].” (fr. 41). This is also to say that, despite most men being ignorant of it, the *Logos* is in fact ‘common’.⁶⁹ Since the *Logos* is common to man and beast, god and mortal, – since the *Logos* steers everything through all things – to follow the *Logos* is also what allows man to know himself. “Know thyself” was one of three aphorisms carved into the temple of the Delphic Oracle by which the Seven Sages did not mean the idea of the substantial primacy of the mind [nous] that in time would be discovered as the essential nature of the *psukhē*. To know oneself is to know the *Logos*, which is to know the *kosmos*. To know the *kosmos* is to know the chain of resemblances in which everything is steered through everything. It is to know that all things are one, in short, that “wisdom is one thing” (Heraclitus fr. 50, 41).

With thought having discovered that all things are one and the Same, in time, and as the gathering [logos], which is thought itself, penetrates deeper into the soul, in fact the more the *logos* goes looking for the self, the more it retreats into the self to discover that the *kosmos* and the soul are one and the Same, the more vividly will it eventually, in the intimacy of self-presence, hear the voice of the Other and that of commandment [arkhein]. Writing in *On Grammatology*, Derrida accurately captures this predicament of self-search in what he calls ‘Arche-speech’; one believes (in this case Rousseau) to have discovered the origin of natural law through self-search when in fact what one hears is always the voice of the other and that of commandment. Arche-speech is in other words the spoken form of law, because ‘the native unity of the voice and writing is *prescriptive*’ (Derrida 1997: 17).⁷⁰ That is, as thought takes hold of the Same, and believes it to be *polemos*, the Other enters into openness. But around 500 BC, the voice of the Other has yet to call upon man to observe the divine law of the ruling principle [arkhē]. Again, this is because man has yet to regard himself or anyone else as the source of his actions. There is no mind to posit as the

⁶⁹ “One must follow what is common; but although the *Logos* is common, most men live as if they had a private understanding of their own.” (Heraclitus fr. 2).

⁷⁰ The conjunction of *phonē* and *logos* is essentially prescriptive then; the voice cannot but order by command simply because language can never be fully reconciled with the world.

supreme and unchanging origin that articulates the relation between voice and the steering of the world, *phonē* and *logos*.

The voice one hears when one retreats into oneself is the *Logos* of *polemos* in which *logos* is both human thought and the movement of *kosmos*. It is the conjuncture of force relations that steers all things through all things; the law by which the motion of the *kosmos* is seen, heard, and felt as the vibrating tension of force relations. The steering of *kosmos* is the attunement [harmonia] of these infinite relationships of tension. The *Logos* animates the soul as well as the *kosmos* in the constant gathering of opposites. This is how the soul, in being at variance with itself, agrees with itself, and it is by way of this permanent variance, which instils movement in the soul, one becomes capable of thought [logikē]. Accordingly, and analogous to the curvature of bow and soul, it is by way of this conjuncture of force relations, immanent the folding of *kosmos* upon itself, that the movement of each *planētēs* [wanderer] comes to agree with itself in the curvature of its celestial wandering. It is how, in Democritus, the same curvature is read in the movement of the atom. As Aristotle explains of Democritus: "soul and mind are, he says, one and the same thing, and this thing must be one of the primary and indivisible bodies, and its power of originating movement must be due to its fineness of grain and the shape of its atoms; he says that of all the shapes the spherical is the most mobile, and that this is the shape of the particles of both fire and mind." (On the Soul 405a 8-13).

In the cosmic chain of resemblances, the movement of the atom will be similar to the movement of thought, as the activity of the soul as *Logos*. The self-movement of the *psukhē* will be similar to the self-movement of the *kosmos*. In the outset, here at the threshold of the Western *epistēmē*, thought is therefore not a certain activity of mind, which seeks to imitate in the domain of the real what corresponds to the fixture of *eidos*, as it would become in the development that begins with Plato⁷¹ and which culminates with the Cartesian *Cogito* where consciousness of being would be subordinated to the experience of thought. The mode of thinking is one of becoming as opposed to the static, *polemos* as opposed to *stasis*. Thought has yet to discover the self-restraining hold of *statos*

⁷¹ Perhaps not surprisingly, legend has it "that Plato wished to burn all the writings of Democritus that he could collect" (Diogenes Laertus 7.40).

[being placed], which ‘set things before thought’ as the mind strives to rise above *polemos*. Thinking is inseparable from flow, flux, and consistency, since thought is of the same order of reality as being, not merely by virtue of being self-moving and thus alive and divine like the *kosmos*,⁷² but by virtue of having a tangible material reality.⁷³ Anaximenes thus explains how the *arkhē* of *kosmos* and the *arkhē* of soul are both constituted in the living substance of *aer* [air]. *Aer* travels through the channels of *aisthēsis* [sense-perception] by which the *psukhē* makes the world of things intelligible.⁷⁴ Man breathes in the *Logos*, and through the senses [aisthētērion, the organ of sense] the *psukhē* is linked with the *kosmos*. So much so that the only thing that prevents it from growing together with what lies outside is sleep. While asleep, the channels of *aisthētērion* are closed except for the linkage of soul and body with the *kosmos* through the inhalation and exhalation of *aer*, which, as Sextus Empiricus would later say, can be likened to a root [rādix].

In time, the *Logos* will gradually lose its continuity with material reality and instead acquire continuity with the knowledge of *philosophia*. In time, the *Logos* will be divorced from the signs that speak it and instead be conferred onto them from the outside. *Logos* will be seen both as a certain calculative faculty of mind as well as the linguistic turn by which one gives an account of the nature of things, their articulated outline, their inner reason, the principle of their coming into being as actuality from the potentiality of the *prōtēs aitia* [first cause] and the sum of causes [aitias einai]. But for some time, the *Logos* would play among the crude resemblances of *polemos* intermingling with the elements to influence the soul with moist and dryness, cold and heat. The soul would be likened to water [hudōr] because the seed of all animals is fluid,⁷⁵ and

⁷² As Aristotle explains commenting on the ancients’ idea of the soul: “Alcmaeon also seems to have held a similar view about the soul; he says that it is immortal because it resembles ‘the immortals’, and that this immortality belongs to it in virtue of its ceaseless movement; for all the ‘things divine’, moon, sun, the planets, and the whole heavens, are in perpetual movement.” (On the Soul 405a29-32).

⁷³ Both in Pythagorean thought and in the two great schools of thought that appeared in sixth century BC, the Ionian and the Italian, we find the idea of the activity of *nous* having a material reality.

⁷⁴ “As the primordial principle from which all other things are derived, it [the soul] is cognitive; as finest in grain, it has the power to originate movement.” (On the Soul 405a 23-24).

⁷⁵ “Of more superficial writers, some e.g. Hippo, have pronounced it to be water; they seem to have argued from the fact that the seed of all animals is fluid, for Hippo tries to refute those who

it would be held to be *aer* since *aer* is the finest grain of things⁷⁶ and, finally, to fire [pur] because, though certainly a conduit through which the *Logos* flows into the soul and prior to *hudōr*,⁷⁷ *aer* is not the purest form of *Logos* among the four elements. The purest form in which the substance of *Logos* appears is fire: “This world, which is the same for all, no one of gods or men has made. But it always was, is, and will be: an ever-living fire, with measures of it kindling, and measures going out.” (Heraclitus fr. 30). The *Logos* is an ever-living fire, but this is not the fire of flame.⁷⁸ It is the fire of dry exhalation in which the soul also consists, the exhalation which “... is most incorporeal and in ceaseless flux”, Aristotle would later explain in his treatise on the soul; “... for fire is the subtlest of the elements and nearest to incorporeality; further, in the most primary sense, fire is both moved and originates movement in all the others.” (On the Soul 405a 6-8, 27). Fire is both what moves and originates movement in all things, which is how it is the purest of the elements and therefore holds primacy over them. By resemblance, Heraclitus explains in fragment 118, “The dry soul is wisest and best”, whereas the mixture of soul with moist will, if only temporarily, extinguish the fire of soul and thus become the source of all kinds of humiliations: “A man when he is drunk stumbles and is led by a beardless boy, not knowing whither he goes, for his soul is wet.” (fr. 117).

But the primacy of fire, moving in itself and instilling movement in all else, is also the principle that explains how the *Logos* steers everything [*panta*]; fire is both what moves in itself throughout the quintessential relatedness of *panta* and that which originates movement in *panta*. “The thunderbolt steers all things”, Heraclitus says in fragment 64. Commonly associated in the oratory tradition with the fiery weapon wielded by Zeus, the thunderbolt steers all things, not by virtue of being wielded by the Sky-God, but because it resembles fire originating movement in *panta* and moving throughout *panta*. The purest

say that the soul is blood, on the ground that the seed, which is the primordial soul, is not blood.” (On the Soul 405b 1-4).

⁷⁶ “Diogenes (and others) held the soul to be air because he believed air to be the finest grain and a first principle; therein lay the grounds of the soul’s power of knowing and originating movement.” (On the Soul 405a 22-23).

⁷⁷ In both Anaximenes and Diogenes, air is prior to water among the four elements.

⁷⁸ As Philoponus explains commenting on Aristotle who cites Heraclitus in *On the Soul* (405a25): “By fire he does not mean flame: fire is the name given to the dry exhalation, of which the soul also consists.” (Guthrie 2003: 432-33).

form of *panta* is *Logos*, and the purest matter of *Logos* is fire, the purest matter of fire is the *energeia* of *keraunos* [thunderbolt], *keraunos* that in its resemblance to the movement by fire of the soul animates the sense of aliveness, by nature common to all living beings, but to man the sign of the divine resemblance of *polemos* in which *makhē* [combat] is *makaria* [happiness]. Thunderbolt steers everything as the dreadful Warlike Arēs stirs up the fire of soul, which erupts in a divine exaltation that satiates the body with vigour; rage and affect are the *energeia* of *keraunos*. *Keraunos* reveals how the world is both steered by fire and made of fire, with measures of it kindling and measures going out; the pure catatonic rupture and abrupt disappearance of force of the warrior strikes like lightning and falls back into the silent movement of *kosmos*. The Sovereignty of the Same, *keraunos* is both what illuminates the soul and what lights up the site of *polemos* to disclose some beings as men and others as gods, some as slaves and others as free.

So the bond of resemblance between the soul and the steering of *kosmos* would be seen for some time. But as soon as the mind awakens in the soul, as soon as the site of *polemos* is displaced and projected onto the spiritual battleground of the soul with the discovery of the military model, intrinsic to political man and political community, it will be found that something beyond the relativity of force itself is responsible for the steering of *kosmos* and all that dwell beneath the eternal celestial wonder. The *Logos* of *polemos* will recede from the world of things and never fully awaken from its dormant place of residence. Not before the dawn of modern natural science would fragments of this ancient knowledge emerge in the grid created by a glance, an examination, and from its slumber be reborn within the confines of the disciplined knowledges as the *Theory of Relativity*.⁷⁹

But for a while, *polemos* would be king and father of all. *Polemos* would reveal some as gods, others as men, some the *Logos* would make slaves, and others free. But then, the *Logos* of *polemos* was never more than a play of primitive resemblances where the acquisition of knowledge would always be

⁷⁹ More than twenty-five hundred years before Einstein, Heraclitus, albeit phrased in oracular and poetic lingua, said that energy (fire) is the essence of matter, and that everything always was, is, and will be energy in flux, in relativity.

referred back to the infinite task of knowing what *polemos* is. *Epistēmē* would shine in its raw being, but remain caught up in the crude, enigmatic, and tedious resemblances in which knowledge would always be reabsorbed into the Sovereignty of the Same. The *Logos* knows only being and has no account of time other than what is held in the infinite suspension of *kosmos*; time and space are collapsed into the single continuum of being and *kosmos*. The beginning is always the end since “the road up and the road down are one and the same” (Heraclitus fr. 60). The road itself can never be known, just as one cannot step into the same river twice; “On those who enter the same rivers, ever different waters flow.” (fr. 12). Things are ever in a state of flux and flow wherefore no knowledge is possible of their essential nature;⁸⁰ no cause can be deciphered of how existing things come to acquire form from the potentiality of matter and then be arranged well and beautifully. So, after these thinkers, Aristotle explains in the *Metaphysics* (984b 6-10), “... men were again compelled (as we have said) by truth itself [autēs tēs alētheias] to investigate the ruling principle [ezētēsan arkhēn].” The *Logos* will be inadequate to account for the origin of things, their nature, and their end:

All those who regard the universe as a unity, and assume as its matter some one nature, and that corporeal and extended, are clearly mistaken in many respects. They only assume elements of corporeal things, and not of incorporeal ones, which also exist. They attempt to state the causes of generation and destruction, and investigate the nature of everything; and at the same time do away with the cause of motion. Then there is their failure to regard the essence or formula as a cause of anything... For presumably it is unnatural that either fire or earth or any other such element should cause existing things to be or become well and beautifully disposed. (Ibid. 988b 22-30, 984b 11).

It is not be possible, Aristotle explains, for the world to come into being from the movement of fire or originate from earth, since the elements merely refer to the corporeal reality of the *arkhē*, and if the *arkhē* were purely ‘corporeal’ [eidomai, visible] the beautiful [kalos] and the good [agathos] would not be possible; there would be no cause of the movement by which the good

⁸⁰ As Aristotle explains of Heraclitean doctrine: “... all sensible things are ever in a state of flux and there is no knowledge about them” (*Metaphysics* 987a 31-32).

and the beautiful come into being. Hence, there must be in the world, Aristotle explains, an additional cause other than the material in order for things to move and be brought together. This *psukhē* will take that place and become that site of order on which the corporeal reality of man and *kosmos* will be rearranged in accordance with a different order of reality that will be determined as the *aitias* [cause] of how movement is originated in things; how things are arranged as potentiality and move toward an end guided by the actuality of the good. But how is it we come to find this idea of the good in the *arkhē* of *kosmos*, and what trajectory of thought has brought about the conviction in Aristotle that the *arkhē* must also be sought out at the level of the incorporeal?

In the Pre-Socratics, the question of the movement of *kosmos* seems to concern the unity in which *kosmos*, being, and thought belong to the same order of reality, the self-moving material reality of the Same. Although not necessarily visible [*eidomai*], the *arkhē* of *kosmos* and the *arkhē* of soul appear on the plane of consistency of the corporal by virtue of being made up of the living substance of air, water or, eventually with Heraclitus, fire. To this mode of thinking, movement refers to a perpetual state of flux of energy with neither end nor beginning. In Aristotle, however, we can see that movement refers to the kind of motion in which things are steered toward a certain end. This is how Aristotle cannot do without the incorporeal element of the *arkhē*. If movement has no cause but the material, as the pure relativity of force, then there cannot be an end of things. Nor can there be a beginning. In effect, it would make no sense to speak of the good, the beauty of which now seems immediately apparent to the eye of classical man.

Now, this obviously raises the more fundamental question of how the order of things in the first place has come to be recognised in terms of the good. In Heraclitus, we saw how order appeared at the site of the clearing as the thunderbolt illuminated the cosmic battlefield, and in that flash gave birth to the gathering [*logos*] of *kosmos* in the soul, the reflective activity also known as thought. The site of *polemos* flashes up and enlightens the soul, which, as it takes hold of one side of *polemos* or the other, affirms the fact that order exists. What happens in Aristotle is that the site of *polemos* encountered by thought is projected back onto the world with the illumination of the mind taking hold of

what now appears to be either good or bad, night or day, famine or plenty. *Anthrōpos* and *polemos* have changed places, which is how man, rather than war, will reveal things in their articulated outlines. The mind will be what makes things visible [eidomai] wherefore it will be seen as the resemblance of what now appears to man as the form of the good; the clearing will take up residence in the fixture of the mind as the *eidos* of the good.

This is how, in one of the few passages of the *Republic* where Plato speaks of the relationship between the *kosmos* and man, we learn of a new resemblance of mind and *kosmos*. Now, it seems the *kosmos* springs from the form of the good. The sun is the offspring of the form of the good, Socrates explains, since, like the good, the sun makes the form of things visible and thus intelligible. Having explained how vision receives 'the power which it possesses as an influx dispensed from the sun', Socrates says:

This, then, you must understand that I meant by the offspring of the good which the good begot to stand in a proportion with itself: as the good is both the mind and what converts into pure Intelligence [te noun kai ta nooumena], so is this in the visible world to vision and the objects of vision... when the eyes are no longer turned upon objects upon whose colours the light of day falls but that of the dim luminaries of night, their edge is blunted and they appear almost blind, as if pure vision did not dwell in them... But when, I take it, they are directed upon objects illumined by the sun, they see clearly, and vision appears to reside in these same eyes... Apply this comparison to the soul also in this way. When it is firmly fixed on the domain where truth and reality shine resplendent it apprehends and knows them and appears to possess mind; but when it inclines to that region which is mingled with darkness, the world of becoming and passing away, it opines only and its edge is blunted, and it shifts its opinions hither and thither, and again seems as if the mind could not bring fact to bear. (508c-e).

The mind apprehends the world as the form of the good shines on the surfaces of things, the glittering edges of matter reflecting back on the mind to affirm that reality where things, having relinquished their heterogeneous and mutable potentialities, disclose a certain form of inner nature. As the order of things has now come to be recognised in terms of the good, as the simultaneous withdrawal and projection onto the world of the site of *polemos*, the mind will be able to decipher the possibility of the propinquity of things and impose limits

on them, since the projection of thought onto the world now enables their separation. But it is clear then that, for the activity of thought to take hold of what glitters in the illuminated glow of the good, Plato must necessarily relegate 'the world of becoming and passing away' to that region where, as Socrates says, 'the soul mingles with darkness'. The mode of thinking will therefore no longer be one of becoming, but one of *stasis* as the perpetual movement of *polemos* is arrested in the restraining hold of *eidos* by which things are placed or arranged from the vantage point of the mind, as the illumination of the good.

Now, in what exactly did the form of the good consist, the good which would be sought out the level of political life? In the same passage of the *Republic*, this is actually the question Glaucon invites Socrates to explain having set forth 'the nature of justice, sobriety, and the other virtues'. Before turning his attention to the question of the sun as the offspring of the good, Socrates responds: "It will right well content me [to explain the nature of the good], my dear fellow, but I fear that my powers may fail and that in my eagerness I may cut a sorry figure and become a laughing-stock. Nay, my beloved, let us dismiss for the time being the nature of the good in itself; for to attain to my present surmise of that seems a pitch above the impulse that wings my flight today." (506d-e). Indeed, the nature of the good seems to have posed a difficult question to the Greeks, as attested to also in the satirical poetic gesture by Amphis. An Athenian comic playwright, Amphis has one of his characters say: "And as for the good that you are likely to get on her account, I know no more about it, master, than I do of the good of Plato." (Diogenes Laertus 3.27). Moreover, legend has it that when Plato gave a lecture entitled *On the Good*, it confused the audience to such a degree that most walked out.

In any case, if we look beneath the chatter and the mockery of the comedians the problem that appears, as the site of *polemos* is fixed under the illuminated gaze of *eidos*, in fact the true paradox that now becomes evident is that the world comes to a permanent rest. Writing in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle is quite aware of this problem as he reproaches Plato for being unable to explain the source of the movement of *kosmos*, which is everywhere apparent. In effect, the failure in Plato to recognise a source of movement, says Aristotle, makes him unable to ascribe a cause to the form of the good (988a 14-15). But in the

wonderment of this idea of the good, in the profound estrangement that must to have caught the philosopher in the quiet moments where he pondered the origin of the mind and the steering of the world, a new chain of resemblances has appeared. In Aristotle, the mystery of the good is resolved with the introduction into the principle of the *arkhē* of the particular order of reality, which is the 'incorporeal'. Since the good is the end of things, and yet also what exists in actuality for things to become well and beautifully disposed, Aristotle argues, the good cannot merely be of a single order of reality. Moreover, since the good is what moves the *kosmos*, but also what does not move, it must be corporeal, but also incorporeal. Consequently, the divine *arkhē* of *kosmos* must be both the origin of things, in terms of material reality, and the incorporeal command that steers and guides things to become well disposed. The *arkhē*, which is both corporeal and incorporeal then, must also be the site of their intersection thus making the origination of movement possible.

But how is the corporeal joined with the incorporeal so as to originate movement? In Aristotle, this is now resolved in the relationship between the *arkhē* of *kosmos* and the soul. Remember how Aristotle seems most concerned to explain how the earlier thinkers arrived at the account of fire as the essence of the soul on the basis of the conviction that fire is 'nearest to incorporeality', and when Aristotle refers to Democritus to speak of the homology of the curvature of mind, cosmos, and atom, what occupies the philosopher is precisely this question of the possibility of movement at the intersection of the corporal and the incorporeal. So when one man in his sobriety said that the incorporeality [*asōmatos*] of mind existing in all animals and throughout nature is the cause of all order and arrangement,⁸¹ in assuming "... a principle in things which is the cause of beauty, and the sort of cause by which motion is communicated to things", Aristotle says, he far exceeded the wisdom of his predecessors with their 'disorganised knowledges' (Ibid. 984b 15-22).⁸² Now, while the knowledge of this *arkhē* did not become clearly delineated before Anaxagoras, Aristotle explains, Hesiod may have been the first to provide an

⁸¹ Aristotle refers to Anaxagoras.

⁸² "Hence when someone said that there is Mind [*nous*] in nature, just as in animals, and that this is the cause of all order and arrangement, he seemed like a sober man in contrast with the haphazard statements of his predecessors." (Metaphysics 984b 15-19).

answer to the question of the *aitias* of the beautiful and the good by making love [erōs] and desire [epithumia] the *arkhē* of existing things:

“For he says, where he is describing the creation of the universe,
‘Love she created first of all the gods . . .’⁸³
And Hesiod says,
‘First of all things was Chaos made, and then
Broad-bosomed Earth . . .
And Love, the foremost of immortal beings,’
thus implying that there must be in the world some cause to move things and
bring them together.” (Ibid. 984b 25-31).

Since Earth is the offspring of Chaos and all immortal beings are the offspring of *Erōs*, day the offspring of night, there is a principle in things, which is the cause of how motion is originated in them; a principle that determines how Earth comes into being from Chaos, how night turns into day. But day and night, male and female, famine and plenty cannot be the offspring of one another.⁸⁴ Nature is one; it is the simultaneity of opposites and nothing more since no one of gods or men has made the world.⁸⁵ But this cannot explain how or why things have come to be and then be disposed in such a way as to become drawn to the good and the beautiful. It cannot explain how vegetation and animal life grow and develop toward a zenith, how they flourish and then decay losing the vivacity of youth as they pass into old age and die. It cannot explain the animate, Aristotle says in *On the Soul*. It is the *telos* of the seed to become plant, just as it is for the ship to sail the seas. The form of the seed will determine the form of the plant, just as the form of wood, great or small, will be a cause of the form of the ship. But whereas the ship is the product of human *technē*, there is mind in nature, Aristotle explains, which is what Hesiod might have been the first to describe by making *erōs* the *arkhē*, thus making intelligible to man the occurrence of motion and the cause of why things are brought together.

⁸³ Parmenides fr. 13.

⁸⁴ “Teacher of most men is Hesiod. They are sure he knew most things, a man who could not recognise day and night; for they are one.” (Heraclitus fr. 57).

⁸⁵ Heraclitus fr. 30.

Epithumia makes possible the origination of motion in the body in being drawn to the good of *erōs* that influences movement in it. Being most incorporeal, the good originates the movement of the corporeal, the body. The incorporeality of the good, then, is the cause for things to move in order to be brought together. It follows, therefore, that since nature not only provides what is good, but also the opposite of order and the beautiful, Aristotle says, Empedocles was right in dividing the cause of movement into love and strife: "... since it is apparent that nature also contains the opposite of what is good, i.e. not only order and beauty, but disorder and ugliness, a thinker introduced Love and Strife⁸⁶ as the respective causes of these things..." If one is to follow out the true meaning of this principle in Empedocles, Aristotle continues, "we should find that Love is the cause of good [agathon], and Strife of bad [kakon]." (Metaphysics 984b 32-985a, 985a 7-9).

What we see in Aristotle is in other words the complete displacement and reorganisation of the site of *polemos*. Instead of the horizontal proliferation of polarities, we will have the vertical distribution of ruling and subject element. Instead of the order of concurrent opposites, that is, instead of *polemos*, we will see their division into strife and peace [eirene], mind and desire, good and bad. Suffice it to say, this upsets the entire sense of order found in the *Logos* of *polemos*. For the *arkhē* of bad and good [kakon kai to agathon arkhē] to become the arbiter of movement, *philia* and *neikos* are necessarily divorced thus fundamentally altering the archaic sense of *harmonia*. As Aristotle says, no doubt in allusion to the fragments of Heraclitus, it is the nature of things to be united (in being drawn together by love) as a harmony of opposites: "For there would be no attunement [harmonia] without high and low notes or any animals without male and female, both of which are opposites". (Eudemian Ethics 1235a: 25). However, what Aristotle has in mind is not the simultaneity of opposites, but the fact that opposites exist as a condition of possibility of *harmonia* as engendered by the *arkhē*.

The *Logos* of *polemos* is divided on the axis of the ruling principle, as *harmonia* is recognised in terms of the movement by the *arkhē* that brings things together according to love and friendship and, on the other hand,

⁸⁶ Aristotle is referring to Empedocles (fr. 17, 26).

separates them through strife. The *Logos* of concurrent of opposites will therefore be seen as an enigma, the unification of two essentially antithetical principles. As Aristotle says in the *Metaphysics*: "It is impossible that the same thing belong and not belong to the same thing at the same time and in the same respect... No one can believe that the same thing can (at the same time) be and not be." (1005b 19-24). Also referred to as the law of contradiction, which is in fact already delineated in Plato,⁸⁷ Aristotle abandons the *Logos* of concurrent opposites in order to invest in the order of things the true enigma of an incorporeal level of reality held to be the good, which functions as the positive ground of knowledge and being and the indispensable principle of the *arkhē* of *kosmos*. We could also follow Aristotle in the *Politics* and say that in the incorporeality of the good, of which the mind is also made, the principle of subject and ruling element of the *arkhē* 'always comes to light' (1254a: 31-33). In fact, with Aristotle, the good reappears in the eternal eclipse of the mind as the site of *polemos* becomes indistinguishable from the fixture of mind. The fixture of mind mirrors the restraining hold of *arkhē* that rules the *kosmos*, as thought articulates the particular space which Heidegger would later call onto-theology or metaphysics.

But to speak in terms of what is actually said in Aristotelian discourse, what is discovered at the site of these resemblances, where the mind is seen as a simile of the *arkhē* of *kosmos*, is that the soul is steered by the same principles. For the soul to follow the good, directing itself towards or against the forces that tempt to move it, that is, in order for the soul not to be absorbed in the ceaseless flux of *panta* where good and bad cannot be determined, part of it will need to withdraw from the world of things and come to rest in the mind as the necessary correlative of the soul to the good. But, at the same time, the soul will have to remain open to the potentiality of movement. Therefore, it will be found that the *psukhē* is divided too. The *psukhē* is divided into the incorporeal, which remains at rest, and the corporeal, in which movement is originated, as movement is realised in the conjunction of *epithumia* and the calculative faculty

⁸⁷ As Plato states in the *Republic* (436b): "It is obvious that the same thing will never do or suffer opposites in the same respect in relation to the same thing and at the same time. So that if ever we find these contradictions in the functions of the mind."

[logos]. The *psukhē* will be understood as a form of ‘double articulation’; the incorporeal activity of mind, in which the *logos* also consists, and the corporeal activity of desire. The fixture of the mind will be seen as the ‘unmoved’ point of the origin, which is pure incorporeality (and hence remains unmoved), from which the soul steers and guides itself. This is what Aristotle means when he says that ‘the mind is always right’, whereas ‘appetite and imagination may be either right or wrong’ (On the Soul 432a 26). The mind is the incorporeal reality of thought, which remains unmoved [akinētos] being situated in a relation of exteriority to the potentiality of movement. This is why it cannot be wrong, but also how the activity of mind, as the apprehension of the world by thought, resembles ‘a coming to rest or arrest’ rather than movement (Ibid. 407a 32). Appetite and desire, on the other hand, is the ‘instrument of movement’ of what lies outside the body, as motion is originated in it through the joining of desire with sense-perception [aisthēsis] and calculation [logos]; like ‘a ball and socket joint’, Aristotle explains, movement appears in the joining of desire with *logos* because there the convex and the concave sides are respectively an end and beginning (Ibid. 433b 21-23).

So, at the interstice of calculation and desire, *logos* and *epithumia*, we find the mechanism for movement that functions in the following manner: “... the object of appetite starts a movement and as a result of that thought gives rise to movement, the object of appetite being to it a source of stimulation.” (Ibid. 433a 19-20). The object of appetite originates movement by way of the *epithumia*, which, as it is brought to a halt in the apprehension of thought, originates the movement. Being unmoved and situated in a relation of exteriority to the *epithumia* the mind remains pure actuality whereas, in the mechanics of the *psukhē*, the *logos* will be situated at the intermediary position between potentiality and actuality thus making action possible.

In fact, even when it happens that the *psukhē* acts as an effect of responding to the *epithumia*, as in the case of moral weakness, the part of the mind which is not the *logos* remains unmoved: “... mind as speculative never thinks what is practicable, it never says anything about an object to be avoided or pursued... Further, even when the mind does command and thought bids us pursue or avoid something, sometimes no movement is produced; we act in

accordance with desire, as in the case of moral weakness.” (Ibid. 433a 1-2). But moral weakness is not the effect of the complete absence of mind. The *logos* still has some part in the production of action, since the *epithumia* is too incompetent to account fully for movement; “for those who successfully resist temptation have appetite and desire and yet follow mind and refuse to enact that for which they have appetite.” (Ibid. 433a 6-8). So to the extent that one may consider the imagination of *logos* as a kind of thinking, Aristotle explains, the sources of movement in the *psukhē* are *logos* and *epithumia*.

We could also say that, as the soul is constituted in the caesura that articulates in it mind and desire, the soul which can now be held accountable for the production of order and the beautiful on the one hand, and, on the other, disorder and the ugly, in the interplay of variance and correspondence between desire and mind, between the articulation of movement and the confinement of rest. As the ‘sorting table’ of good [agathon] and bad [kakon], the soul will be the site of friendship [philia] when the appetites agree with the mind, and, accordingly, the site of strife when the appetites run counter to *nous* and *logos*. Though only possible in beings that have a sense of time, Aristotle says, the later happens “... when a principle of reason and a desire are contrary... for while mind bids us hold back because of what is future, desire is influenced by what is just at hand: a pleasant object which is just at hand presents itself as both pleasant and good, without condition in either case, because of want of foresight into what is farther away in time” (Ibid. 433b 5-10).

Temporalisation of action, then, is what makes this model of the *psukhē* work. It is what enables the *psukhē* to act in accordance with the good and the beautiful, since the exercise of mind temporalises the potential form of behaviour which relates itself to time by taking it into its reckoning in the production of the right action. *Epithumia*, on the contrary, has no account of time, which is why the immediate pursuit of the object of appetite will sometimes result in the wrong action being carried out. By way of temporalising action or, as Aristotle says in the *Politics*, to ‘foresee with the mind’, the soul will be able to draw the distinction between “the apparent good that is the object of appetite, and the real good [kalon, beautiful] that is the object of the rational

wish.” (Metaphysics 1072a 28).⁸⁸ To act in accordance with the real good requires time, not least because it relies on the good of *nous* to enter into alignment with the calculative powers of *logos*, which may then take hold of and steer the erratic forces of *epithumia* toward the object of desire. But since the real good, as opposed to the apparent good, will not reveal itself to action before the object of desire has aligned with the mind and come to a rest, certainty of the real good inevitably becomes contingent in the most absolute sense. In fact, the real good cannot be determined but in the infinite suspension of action, the contemplative mind *per se*. Though ever-present in the mind, the good always seems to occur at a certain distance to reality, which can never really be mitigated by action. Accordingly, action is never really present in being or should we perhaps rather say that this is what now will be posited as the essence of action, the mind bringing the *logos* to bear on the relations of forces? Safe to say though, in this model of the *psukhē* the pursuit of the good will be marked by the proportional increase of disorder and the ugly. Man cannot escape the bad and the ugly precisely because it is in the idea of the good that he now speaks, thinks, and exists. Do we hear the faint echo of tragedy here where certain impulses of desire will find no *katharsis*, but rather continue to invest in the relations of forces the ever-greater urgency for man to rule over the *epithumia* to prevent the strife of mind and desire from causing the bad and the ugly?

Indeed, this model of the *psukhē* seems to mark the return of the terrible where thought has lost every account of how terrible things seem to happen to man under the influence of *arkhē*. The terrible and the dreadful becomes the model, as the soul is made responsible for good and bad, friendship and strife. The positive ground of being is what occurs as the mind takes hold of one side of *polemos* and therein believes it has the truth or, more precisely, that one side which is life according to the good [to eu zēn]. The life of the soul will therefore no longer resembles the life [bios] of the bow [bios] or the string of the lyre, since the soul can no longer agree with itself in being at variance with itself as a

⁸⁸ It is precisely this intention that guides Aristotle in the passage of the *Politics* where he explains how that which can foresee with the mind is the naturally ruling element, while that which can do these things with the body is the naturally ruled and slave. (*Politics* 1252a: 31-35).

mere relationship of force. Mere force relations resemble strife and hence will be referred to the causes of the bad. In fact, in order for the soul to agree with itself in its composite nature of *nous*, *logos*, and *epithumia*, it must permanently straighten out itself by means of temporalising action. To this sense and mode of being (life according to the good), the order of reality of the mind will constitute the highest ground of being; to escape the workings of the inner laws of corporeal being will represent the highest value, since it is on the basis of this escape that mankind will be able to pursue the real good.

Paradoxically, then, the good life will necessarily come at the loss of the intimate sense of being alive, as the happiness [makaria] found in the sense of aliveness man discovered in *makhē* [combat] is replaced by the happiness of living well [eu zēn]. It is the same shift we find in the transformation of the meaning of *eudaimon*, which is the conjunction of *eu* [well] and *daimon* [divine spirit]. In the archaic sense, to be *eudaimon* means to be living in a way, which is well-favoured by the gods, whereas, as we find the term in Aristotle, this mode of being appears to have withdrawn from the field of positive experiences. In Aristotle, *eudaimonia* means the happiness of living well in the sense of the permanent intervention in the soul by the mind, the *logos* straightening out the soul in accordance with the good. In fact, this idea of happiness, which separates the classical world from the archaic, is precisely what guides Aristotle in the famous passage of the *Politics* (1252b 30) where he speaks of the end of the perfect community in terms of the opposition between the fact of living [to zēn] and life according to the good [to eu zēn]. Rather than expressing the sovereign *exceptio* of 'bare life', pace Agamben, the phrase "born with regard to life, but existing essentially with regard to the good life" expresses the implicit articulation of the form of the soul in which happiness is what occurs as the incorporeality of mind enters into alignment with the good, the infinite suspension of corporeal being. In fact, this is also how the mode of being we find in the one who is *philopolemos* is seen as something unnatural. Archaic happiness and bliss will not be excluded from the realm of possible experiences, but will rather be considered as deviant or foolish acts, as the archaic harmony of opposites is marked off as the primitive beliefs of the ancients. More precisely, the vigilant sense of *eudaimonia* will lose continuity with the archaic divinities,

be applied to time, and transformed by the disciplines into the pleasure [hēdonē] of the kind of good life one derives from the calm activity of the mind also known as *theōria*. As Aristotle says in the *Metaphysics*: "... active contemplation [theōria] is that which is most pleasant [hēdiston] and best [ariston]." (1072b 17-19).

This development in which *eudaimonia* comes to resemble the happiness of living well [eu zēn] is reflected in the process where corporeality gradually loses continuity with the divine. We could also say that, as the good life is discovered from the vantage point of the contemplative mind, the unity of being will lose continuity with the plurality of gods. In Homer, the one God remains absent, because it is not really man who is seen as the origin or cause of either *makaria* or *eudaimon*. It is not man who is the master of the passions or has the privilege of commanding them in pursuit of happiness. It is rather the passions that have man being animated by the multitude of gods, such as when Arēs stirs up rage, when Zeus inspires in man fight or flight, or when Odysseus brings about cunning. But once the mind is postulated as the world's principle, the one God will come into being as the necessary correlative to the good discovered in the incorporeality of the mind.

Anaxagoras seems to have been the first thinker in which we find a delineation of this resemblance, as he likens the mind to the moving force of *arkhē* steering the *kosmos* (Physics 203b6). With the teachings of the Pythagoreans, a variant of which Aristotle seems to have adopted, the resemblance of the mind to the moving force of *kosmos* is articulated in the doctrine of the kinship of all animate nature. Now, when we find the doctrine on the *nous* in Aristotle, the kinship of mind does not simply concern the matter of movement, the pure relativity of force. As we have seen, it concerns the matter of movement in relation to the good. Having resolved the problem in Plato of the world coming to a rest in the *eidos* of the good, what now faces the philosopher is how to account for the intersection of movement and the good in the relationship between the mind and the *arkhē* of *kosmos*. This will be resolved in the following manner: as the principle that steers all animate nature, the mind is pure incorporeality and therefore always right, Aristotle explains. This is how it resembles the one God. It cannot be wrong because the one God cannot be

wrong. Neither the mind nor God can be wrong because they constitute the linkage, which ties together the good with the ruling principle of mind that governs all animate nature. In the soul, this translates into the idea that the mind remains uncorrupted by the variance induced by the influences of desire. In fact, this is how the incorruptibility of the mind resembles God in being *akinētos* [unmoved]. We could also say that since the mind is to function as the source and origin of order and as the command that upholds order, bidding man to hold back desire, it cannot be brought into movement by desire. At the level of God, however, the doctrine of the kinship of mind translates into a somewhat different arrangement. Whereas the soul is divided into the incorporeal reality of mind and the corporeal reality of desire, God is of a different nature. The caesura once articulated in the soul will now be reconciled in God, as God will become responsible for the existence of beings as anything. The question of whether man is simply a certain species animal, god, slave, or free will no longer be a question of potentiality to be resolved at the site of *polemos*, but will be determined in the domain of actuality as the thing begins to assume an identity held to be its nature.

What happens is that the clearing once encountered by thought is effaced by the resemblance in which the ruling principle of mind is resolved in God, the 'unmoved mover', who is seen as both the origin of things and the command that steers them. Thus, Aristotle explains in the *Metaphysics*, in the *kosmos* "... there is something which moves without being moved [*ou kinoumenon kinei*]..." (1072a 21-25). The *kosmos* is moved in an unceasing motion [*aei kinoumenon kinēsin apauston*] by God who remains unmoved. That which 'moves without being moved' is analogous to the mind in being unmoved, but since things acquire form not only from movement, but also from substance [*ousia*], God must be "... something eternal which is both substance and actuality." God is both substance and actuality, incorporeal and corporeal. But since God is *ou kinoumenon kinei* and therefore cannot be moved (in contrast to substance), in God substance and actuality must be united in a particular kind of movement where, contrary to the workings of the soul, the object of desire and the object of thought remain identical. Now this can only happen if both the cause and the

end of the good apply to the unmoved. Consequently, the divine moves in the following manner:

The object of desire and the object of thought move without being moved. The primary objects of desire and thought are the same. For it is the apparent good that is the object of appetite, and the real good [kalon, beautiful] that is the object of the rational will. Desire is the result of opinion rather than opinion that of desire; it is the act of thinking that is the *arkhē*. Now thought is moved by the intelligible, and one of the series of contraries is essentially intelligible. In this series substance stands first, and of substance that which is simple and exists actually. But the Good, and that which is in itself desirable, are also in the same series; and that which is first in a class is always best or analogous to the best. That the final cause may apply to immovable things is shown by the distinction of its meanings. For the final cause is not only 'the good for something', but also 'the good which is the end of some action'. (Ibid. 1072a-1072b 3).

Although probably one of the most difficult passages in Aristotle, it seems inferable that the caesura articulated in the soul is resolved in God by making the final cause apply to immovable things. Now what does this mean? It means that since 'the cause of all goods is the good itself', as Aristotle explains (Ibid. 985a 9), the nature of God is both the cause of the good, the good itself, and the end of all goods. Substance and actuality, the cause of the good, and the good itself are collapsed in the supreme being of God. The birth of the one God now opens up the field of knowledge to what must be considered as one of the strangest, but no doubt most pertinacious of the resemblances found in the Western *epistēmē*, namely, the kinship of God and mind where one is always liable to pass over into the other. It is strange because the kind of happiness the mind discovers cannot be found but in the solitude of the one God, as the caesura resolved in God returns as the burden of man to whom life [zoē] cannot gain continuity with the divine but in the actuality of thought. Once discovered on the great battlefield of *kosmos*, the mind is believed to speak the order of things as the origin and commandment found in God is projected back onto the world: "For the actuality of thought is life [zoē], and God [Theos] is that actuality; and the essential actuality of God is life most good and eternal." (Ibid. 1072b 26).

It should come as no surprise then that *theōria* will be the expression of the form of knowledge in which the mind communicates the resemblances that issue from the one *Theos* [God]. *Theōria* is what makes *Theos* speak to man. *Theōria* is the divine knowledge, the pure actuality of life, which reveals to man how things become well and beautifully disposed. But this is because *theōria* itself is the good, which is *Theos*. *Theōria* is the activity of the mind most pleasant and best, which is how the pleasure of man active in contemplation resembles the happiness of God. Having praised the contemplation of the mind as most pleasant and best, Aristotle says: "If, then, the happiness which God always enjoys is as great as that which we enjoy sometimes, it is marvellous; and if it is greater, this is still more marvellous." (Ibid. 1072b 24-25). In the love and friendship with knowledge [*philosophia*], the happiness of God intermixes with the pleasures of the mind. Once the expression of the happiness found in being *philopolemos*, the resemblance of *eudaimonia* and *arētē* will persist, but become fundamentally rearranged in the dimension of *philosophia* expressing the virtuousness of good conduct and the discipline of the sound mind, affirmed by the divine activity of *theōria*.

In this development where the love and friendship of knowledge displaces the love and friendship of war, it seems as if corporeal reality loses all continuity with thought. However, knowledge will rather attain a new continuity with corporeal reality, one in which thought will no longer be steered by the *Logos* of *polemos*. Having discovered the *logos* from the vantage point of *theōria*, knowledge detaches itself from being caught up in the simple being of *polemos* where it would always be reabsorbed into the Sovereignty of the Same. By then, perhaps for the first time in the history of Western systems of thought, the mind will be able to set new arrangements for the intelligibility of existing things. Knowledge goes beyond the mere fact of *phusis* to seek out the boundaries 'to set before thought' [*epistēsantos*]; to seek out predication in the realm of what lies beyond the physical world of sensible things, that is, in the field of knowledge Aristotle also refers to as metaphysics. According to Aristotle, the Milesians (Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes) were the first to seek out this field of knowledge, as they posited the idea of the *arkhē* under which all existing things could be explained. However, Aristotle continues, the possibility of fixing

upon things that do not admit of change will not appear before, with Socrates, thought abandons *phusis*: "Socrates, disregarding the physical universe and confining his study to moral questions, sought in this sphere for the universal and was the first to concentrate upon definition." (Metaphysics 987b 1-4).

When, in Plato, we find the term definition or to be more accurate, predication, we learn that it does not apply to sensible things. In fact, Plato argues no doubt in allusion to Heraclitean doctrine, sensible things are always changing and never in a permanent state. To set things before thought therefore has to do with entities of another kind, entities which exist independently of sensible things. As Plato explains in the *Symposium* where he discusses the form of beauty, these entities are in fact abstractions that exist only in themselves: "It is not anywhere in another thing, as in an animal, or in earth, or in heaven, or in anything else, but itself by itself with itself..." (211b). Sensible things are named after these entities that reside in the arbitrary relation of language and the world, and which, of course, are what Plato called *eidos*. *Eidos* is abstract and general in nature constituting a fixed entity, but does not remain constant in name. *Eidos* is rather a kind of functional linguistic form deployed in the practice of language. In its application to sensible things, *eidos* therefore exist by virtue of 'participation', Plato says, and it changes accordingly as an effect of dialogue, which is to say in the practice of discourse. In effect, the predication of *epistēmē*, in the sense of arresting in thought sensible things and disclosing their nature by ascribing to them a form, is not really possible. *Phusis* remains autonomous to the realm of *eidos*, because the physical world remains in a permanent state of change.

Now, with Aristotle, this distinction that Plato was so much a pains to convey will be conflated. Remember how Aristotle, in his elucidations on the *arkhē*, rebukes Plato for ascribing the causes of good and bad to the elements, that is, to *phusis*, which in Aristotle reads as Plato being unable to explain the source of movement in the *arkhē* and, ultimately, the cause of the *eidos* of the good.⁸⁹ The problem we now find in Aristotle is basically the other side the

⁸⁹ In Plato, *eidos* is simply the form of a dyad of the great and the small, the form of which in itself has no cause, Aristotle explains and adds: "Further, he [Plato] assigned to these two elements respectively the causation of good and of evil; a problem which, as we have said, had

same question of the good and the possibility of the movement of *kosmos*, which, as we saw, is resolved with the introduction into the *arkhē* of the incorporeal order of reality. It is the caesura articulated with the introduction of this level of reality (*theōria*) that now returns to be resolved. This is how, in one of the most remarkable passages in the *Metaphysics*, *phusis* is joined with *eidos* to constitute what Aristotle calls the essence of a thing [to ti en einai] (988a 7-14). The *ousia* [essence] of a thing is caused by *eidos*, and, as we saw, God is the cause of *eidos*. As the order of things is derived from *Theos*, it now becomes possible for the mind – from an absolute point, which is permanently at rest and where the truth of things corresponds to a truthful discourse – to fix upon temporality and causality in order to capture in language and confine in the thing an essence [ousia], a nature. In Aristotle, the realm of *eidos* and the world of sensible things are collapsed in the supreme being of God as both substance [ousia] and actuality, opening up the peculiar space within language in which it becomes possible to give a reasoned account of the cause and end of existing things by recourse to God. We could also say that this development, in which it becomes possible for thought to fix upon the essence of things, is born out of the process where the *Logos* is replaced by the *logos* of mind articulated in the resemblance of *theōria* and the one God. It is no coincidence then that *logos*, besides denoting the calculating part of the soul [to logistikon], is also the term Aristotle applies for the predication that gives an account of the nature of things.

4.3. Why is this important, and where is this genealogy on the metaphysics of the mind taking us? It is important because, in a world where the concept remains absent, the safe passage between language and the world that we call order relies on the conjuncture to provide an account of things. In other words, if political community is to function as a site where things can be ‘put’ or ‘placed’ according to their nature, that is, if the activity of government is to be possible, not least in the sense of steering men towards living well, it cannot rely on the mind alone. The mind must be articulated in the chain of resemblances by a conjuncture that assures the possibility of fixing upon the identities of things and their end, the origin of things and the commandment that steers them. This

also been considered by some of the earlier philosophers, e.g. Empedocles and Anaxagoras.” (Metaphysics 988a 14-15).

is the great invention of the philosopher, which however would remain the mere brainchild of the speculative mind so long as *theōria* is distinguished from *technē* and practical wisdom [phronēsis].⁹⁰ That is, even if the one God has now shown himself, man has yet to derive his sense of being from *Theos* as the incorporeal codification of action. In fact, as I will explain in the next chapter, the form in which power expresses itself occurs almost entirely in the domain of corporeal reality, as *technē*. However, with the emergence of early Christian thought, *theōria* will be redeemed as the lost *arkhē* scripture. This is when, in *The Book of Revelation*, we find the peculiar conjunction of *Theos* and *logos* in the figure of John the *theologos*, the one who speaks the Word of God. By then, the erudition will have begun to read the *logos* as the account of the divine Word of God, which articulates in God the origin and the commandments that sanction the government of souls.

But in the world of classical Greece, there really is no *arkhē* scripture in the sense of a universal law to govern all individuals from the privileged centre of the one text. The *arkhē* we find in Aristotle does not take the form of law, but is rather expressed in the practices of discipline as emergent in the government of self. The Aristotelian *Theos* certainly commands, but the government of men is essentially a matter of the government of self, because the resemblance of the good, the mind, and God does not find its endpoint in the prescriptive form of the one law. Contrasting Christian thought with that of the Classical Greeks, we could also say that the reflection of the Greeks upon good conduct is not directed toward a codification of acts, such as in The Ten Commandments of the *Decalogue*, but toward a stylisation of attitudes; man is indeed called upon to govern himself, but the expurgation of conduct presents itself as a kind of open-ended requirement rather than in the form of law. In case of misconduct, there

⁹⁰ *Phronēsis* is derived from experience of being. Whereas the mind apprehends definitions, which cannot be proved by reasoning [logos], *phronēsis* deals with the ultimate particular thing that cannot be apprehended by mind as *epistēmē* in the sense of scientific knowledge, but only by sense-perception and *logos* bringing the sense of being before the mind. This is also how *philosophia* cannot really be practiced in youth since it requires not only mind, but also the experience garnered by *phronēsis*. As Aristotle explains in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "... although the young may be experts in geometry and mathematics and similar branches of knowledge, we do not consider that a young man can have Prudence [phronēsis]. The reason is that Prudence includes a knowledge of particular facts, and this is derived from experience, which a young man does not possess; for experience is the fruit of years... the first principles of Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy are derived from experience: the young can only repeat them." (1142a 5-10).

is certainly a form of punishment to be had, but rather than stipulating how exactly one ought to behave expurgation concerns a matter of overcoming moral weakness, which reads as a sign of the absence of *arkhē*, the lack of moderation and self-control. This also explains the absence of the sovereign *exceptio*. Although Aristotle's denouncement of the disruptive affects of the singular *polemistēs* certainly bares witness to a certain concern about private war, it is for the same reason that the war of every man against every man has yet to be codified juridically as the principle of the state of nature. As Foucault explains in *The Use of Pleasure*, commenting on the Greeks:

We are a long way from a form of austerity that would tend to govern all individuals in the same way, from the proudest to the most humble, under a universal law whose application alone would be subject to modulation by means of casuistry... The few great common laws – of the city, religion, nature – remained present, but it was as if they traced a very wide circle in the distance, inside of which practical thought had to define what could rightfully be done. And for this there was no need of anything resembling a text that would have the force of law, but rather, of a *technē* or 'practice', a *savoir-faire* that by taking general principles into account would guide action in its time, according to its context, and in view of its ends. (Foucault 1992: 62).

This has some important implications, not least for the thesis of Agamben we examined at the beginning of this chapter. It appears Agamben ignores the fact that the Christian idea of the one text to govern the affairs of men, the *arkhē* scripture, remains unknown in classical Greece. In fact, instead of inquiring into the historical reality of the Greeks, and the role and place of Aristotelian discourse, Agamben rather paradoxically seems to read Aristotle precisely like the theologians in time would do, that is, like an *arkhē* scripture.⁹¹ In fact, it seems to me that this might be how Agamben mistakenly posits the idea of life according to the good, as articulated in the *arkhē*, in terms the principle of sovereignty and logic of the *exceptio*. Moreover, it might explain how Agamben sees in Aristotle a distinction between forms of life, upon which political community is supposedly founded, when in fact the idea of good life is actually

⁹¹ Perhaps coincidentally, Agamben in fact refers to Aquinas and Marsilius of Padua's readings of the Latin translation of Aristotle by William of Moerbeke (Agamben 1998: 2).

the expression of the resemblance of the *arkhē* and the mind, that is, the expression of the open-ended requirement of being a *politikon zōon* rather than the austerity of the law without limits. One might even suspect that this is how the thesis of Agamben seems as if it was moulded, not from the fabric of history, but from ideal significations and indefinite teleologies borrowed from a philosophy in pursuit of the origin. As if words and things had somehow attained an originary meaning in Aristotle, we are told to believe that what is found at the historical beginning of politics is the inviolable identity of man and animal. As if the *politikon zōon* had always existed in some kind of monotonous finality, we are told that political man is a figure who has never seen invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises, and ploys – all of that which make up the fabric of history. In short, we are led to believe in a Greek world without *polemos* where the one whose desire is dominated by war cannot be awakened from his dormant place of residence to speak of the love and friendship of war, because sentiments, love, conscience, and instincts are seen from the vantage point of a timeless condition without history.

Indeed, reading Aristotle like an *arkhē* scripture, one is led to believe that words and things have always kept their meanings, that desire had always pointed in unanimous, but opposite directions of man and animal; that man and animal, law and desire, could in fact be traced to a unitary, if concealed, origin where power has never ceased to shine in the pertinacious resemblance with politico-juridical sovereignty. From the point of the origin, the site of a fleeting articulation of law and life that discourse has since obscured and finally lost, one can then, on the one hand, praise Aristotle for having expressed ‘the aporia that lies at the foundation of Western politics’ and, on the other, proclaim the same philosopher to be the secret protagonist of biopolitics, the calamitous spinner of cobwebs uniting the hidden tie of power and bare life, the *politikon zōon* being – by virtue of the opposition to ‘bare life’ – the manifest example of the production by sovereign power of a biopolitical body; that Aristotle, in fact, merely affirms a tenacious bond between sovereign power and life, which can be traced to ‘the most immemorial of the *arcana imperii*’ (Agamben 1998: 6-11).

Is this not precisely the traits of an *arkhē* scripture; the search for the privileged beginning of things, the obfuscation of historical contingency, and the

collapsing of truth and being at the site of the origin? Or, to state it differently, it is not the expression of the kind of inquiry, which is directed to that which is already there in the first place, a primordial truth fully adequate to its own nature? Is it not the kind of tautological exercise Foucault warns about in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, as he exposes the fallacy of the idea of ‘immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession’? If this is so, we should recall from our quotation of Foucault at the beginning of this study that the lofty origin to which such quests are inextricably bound is ‘no more than a metaphysical extension’: “the origin always precedes the Fall. It comes before the body, before the world and time; it is associated with the gods, and its story is always sung as a theogony.” (Foucault 1971: 79).

No irony, then, in fact with Hesiod’s *Theogonia* man once became attuned to this chime as he discovered the moving force of desire in the *arkhē* of *kosmos*. Indeed, by making the good and the beautiful the causes of all things, the poet anticipated the formation of the chain of resemblances that was to be given birth to at the point where the friendship with war was eclipsed by a certain love of the one *Theos*; the point where, as *theōria* dispels the chimeras of the old world, the ruling of mind and *kosmos* will mirror the ruling by *Theos* as the essential actuality of life devoid of foundation in *phusis*. This is why the genealogist will never have faith in *theōria*. Genealogy opposes itself to *theōria* and the love of the one *Theos*, the purpose of which is to establish the true order of things on the basis of the kind of method that proceeds from the recitation of divine birth. Genealogy runs with the grain of a different language than that of the metaphysician, the kind of language that will never sacrifice the vicissitudes of history or give up the friendship with war for transcendental aspirations. Examining the history of politics, the genealogist learns that it was born in an altogether ‘political’ fashion – from *polemos*; from struggles over truth, from contestations of the sense of virtue, and from claims to normality won by conquest. Political man arrives on the stage of history, not in the shadowless night of a first morning of the *arcana imperii*, but in the murmuring cacophony of an endless quarrel of polemical beings. We do not find the ‘original’ basis of politics in the exclusion of the other or in the cast out of the *polemistēs* or the animal from the city of men. As we have seen, political man is not so much the

product of an inclusive exclusion as he is the effect of the quintessential introspective practice born from struggle, accident, and tragedy; a circular movement between war, the government of self, and the steering of *kosmos*.

That being said, what about the thesis of biopolitics Agamben sets out to correct? Is there a possible relationship to be found between the ancient *telos* and biopolitics? Let us begin by getting rid of some false paternities that seem to influence the work of Agamben. In the work of Foucault, biopolitics has little to do with juridical sovereignty as such. Writing in *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault distinguishes biopolitics from juridical sovereignty, as he analyses the shift towards an early industrial capitalism; biopolitics is “a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them.” (Foucault 1998: 136). Moreover, as explained in chapter one, biopolitics occurs at the intersection where disciplinary techniques of subjective individualisation are integrated with regulatory procedures of objective totalisation in the birth of a new political subject, the population. This expresses a way of organising the relationships of forces, which is vastly different from the old juridical model of power and the theory of sovereignty. As Foucault explains, this is particularly evident in the practice of warfare. The existence in question will then no longer be the juridical body of the sovereign whose sovereignty was limited by his survival or death; at stake is the biological existence of a population. Biopolitical power, Foucault is careful to explain, does not mark the return of the ancient sovereign right to kill, since the subject at stake is no longer the sovereign, but the category of life and the subject of population. Moreover, in the classical theoreticians the right to kill of sovereign power was never seen as an absolute privilege, but conditioned by and limited to the defence of the sovereign.⁹² By contrast, with the birth of biopolitics, the right to kill is seen as a universal privilege, as war becomes as a matter of the life of the population, the species existence, and the survival of the race.

⁹² The sovereign right to decide over life and death appeared in two relatively clearly delimited spheres centered around the juridical body of the sovereign; the sovereign could indirectly expose the subject to death in war and directly in the event the subject had transgressed his laws in which case he could punish the subject by having him put to death. For most of the period of the Renaissance, Foucault explains, war accordingly functioned as a means of solving disputes among sovereigns, in defence of whose sovereignty the individual could be mobilised.

In fact, it really makes no sense to speak of life-administering forces before power discovers the population as an object of government, a global mass imbued with the 'mechanics of life' and 'certain productive forces'. Suffice it to say, no such totality is present in the Greek *bios politikos* [political life]. Looking at the government of the subsistence of life in the Classical Greek *oikonomia*, it is clear that the ruling of the household is not a matter of public concern. It does not concern a population as it eventually would with the emergence of 'economy' and the liberal arts of government (Foucault 2007; 2008a). Moreover, the Aristotelian idea of the end of political community, expressed in the resemblance of life according to the good, the virtue of moderation, and the attitude of being a *politikon zōon*, never surfaces at the level of great totalising strategies that targets the life of the individuated body and deploys it within homogeneous mass population.

In fact, even in the most ardent of politico-philosophical discourses, such as Plato's treatise on the *Republic*, the idea of individuals as constitutive of a global mass of life remains absent. As Foucault explains in *The Use of Pleasure*, the Greek principle of moderation is not a prescript of how all individuals must be governed in the same way: "It is true that Plato would give the entire state the virtue of moderation; but he does not mean by this that all would be equally self-controlled: *sōphrosynē* would characterize the city in which those who ought to be ruled would obey, and those who were destined to rule would in fact rule: hence there would be a multitude of 'appetites and pleasures and pains' in children, women, and slaves, as well as in the inferior majority." (1992: 61). In essence, the great totality of population would be impossible in classical Greece all the while that, as we have noted, the modern idea of power, in the sense of an abstract group of institutions and techniques of government, remains absent. The relationships of forces find their expression in the form of dominance and submission, ruling and subject element, that is, in the war that goes on at all times both within man, struggling to dominate his passions, as well as between men, wives and children, the slaves and the free.

However, while Foucault located the emergence of biopolitics in the seventeenth century, a careful reading of his work suggests that he did not delimit the entire genealogy to this period. In his lecture series at Collège de

France, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, and, in particular, *Security, Territory, Population*, we find trajectories of thought that place the early forms of the practices emergent in the corpus of biopolitics beyond modernity. Tracing an itinerary from the 'state of population' and the 'territorial state' to the idea of the 'government of men', Foucault arrives at the idea of the 'government of souls' of Christian pastoral power (Foucault 2007: 123-130). In the shepherd-flock relationship found in the pastoral model of power, Foucault discovers the paradoxical logic according to which, almost two millennia later, biopolitics will allow for the 'flock' of population to be sacrificed in the name of protecting the life of it. In this passage, Foucault is careful to explain that this idea of governing men by means of a shepherd-flock relationship, which was to achieve such devastating effects, "... is certainly not a Greek idea, and nor do I think it is a Roman idea", Foucault says, as he describes how in Greek literature the notions of 'the rudder' and 'the helmsman' occur almost exclusively in the context, not of governing the souls of men, but in terms of 'navigating' the city-state, which as a ship has to be steered clear of reefs, storms, enemies and pirates, and reach safe harbour (Ibid. 122-123).

While obviously, we do not find in the Greeks anything resembling the monastic practices of spiritual direction that constitute the relationship of command and obedience between the tyrannical spiritual director and the subject being directed by command, as he would be by the Word of God, the question is whether the idea of steering men by means of a shepherd-flock relationship was in fact completely alien to the Greeks. As we saw in Xenophon's account of the *militia* in the *Spartan Constitution*, the theme of the herd [*boua*] and the shepherd of education [*paidonomos*] in fact figures prominently in his discussion of the education of Spartan boys. The institution of the *boua* and the practices of the *paidonomos* constituted the foundation upon which Spartan society rested – a society whose constitution was written almost unitarily in the codes of the military model of war. Most importantly, however, in the Spartan *boua*, the relationship between the subject and his *paidonomos* is not a relationship that ties the subject not to an external truth, as in Christianity. So while it may seem that the pastoral model of the shepherd-flock relationship and the model of the *militia* and the *stratia* might have some form of kinship,

which, eventually, would be invested in the biopolitical model of power, this could never unfold on the terrain of classical Greece.

What separates the Greek from the Roman-Christian world is the discovery of an *arkhē* scripture to guide action and define the knowledge of ruling, an *arkhē* scripture which, however, would never fully coincide with the art of governing men in the mundane sphere of the city of men before the emergence of the modern state. Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the military model of the Greeks as articulated precisely in the *arkhē*. While we should avoid subscribing to the erroneous belief of a philosophy, which in pursuit of the origin makes Aristotle the protagonist of a biopolitics that would not come into being before the passing of two millennia, it is equally important to recognise the elements, which, out of accident, error, and succession, would be carried onto a new terrain in the transcription of the discourse on *Theos* and the reworking of the ruling principle. We will then see a kind of convergence where, on the one hand, the military model, having broken loose from its original setting and escaped as the form of the good in the passage between mind and *Theos*, comes to resemble pastoral power, as Christian thought discovers the *logos* as the *arkhē* scripture embodied in the Son of God, the *kēryx*, *angelos*, the messenger, the emissary who transmits commandments and orders, and, on the other, a development in which the shepherd-flock relationship turns up in the knowledge of ruling, as the Roman emperor appears in the image of the philosopher king. We would thereby not have said that biopolitics is a Greek invention, nor that of the Romans or the Christians. Rather, we would have pointed to the complex course of descent in which a series of events bound to a thoroughly heterogeneous set of circumstances once made it possible for some important elements of biopolitics to have their ‘lowly’ beginnings.

One of these beginnings occurs in the practice of *sōphrosynē*. While we should clearly see the expression of a certain ethics in the practice of *sōphrosynē*, a *technē tou biou* [technē of living], we must not suppress the other side of how the Greeks discovered the mind and how it came to function as a strategic incitement for rendering being governable. Classical man is called upon to master himself, not simply as a care of the self, but also so as to transform himself, to correct and sanitise himself, that is, in the first instance to produce a

self; a self which is governable, not only in the relation of oneself to oneself, but precisely by virtue of becomes governable for others. The government of the self goes hand-in-hand with the mind that binds man to the steering of the *militia* and the *stratia*. A disciplinary model for the steering men as a herd, the military model occurs as an assemblage of forces where the self-disciplinary spaces occupied by the *stratiōtēs* and the *stratēgos* are tied together in the principle of command [arkhein]. Although the idea of the government of souls by divine providence is essentially Christian, there is certainly a resemblance between the shepherd-flock relationship of pastoral power and the relationship between *stratiōtēs* and *stratēgos* in the military model. Both models conceive of the government of men as a matter of following command, even if the *stratia* often did not behave as one, but became scattered as the hoplite discarded his shield and fled from battle. Moreover, we should note that both models held together by the practice of an *askēsis*. Like the military model of power, pastoral power cannot function without the kind of government of self in which man, through the practice of an *askēsis*, brings his body in the state of submission in the hierarchical division of the soul into subject and ruling element.

There is no *arkhē* scripture, we should contend with Foucault, no divine Word of God, to govern men in the world of classical Greece. We are at the level of a set of practices that seemingly have no need for a single great text that has the force of law. Yet, as I will discuss in the next chapter, this is not the whole truth. What is at stake in the Greek self-relationship is not simply a *technē tou biou*, which has no need to seek out order beyond concrete practices. In fact, even if it appears as a marginal theme, it is in the classical Greeks we first encounter the idea of man as part of a flock that must be prescribed a proper sense of justice. It is the theme of the flock, but not so much in the sense of the domesticated herd as that of the horde and the war of every man against every man in the elaboration of the idea of a public sphere traversed by perpetual war. The shepherd of justice and wisdom will then appear to put the wretched men under his command. This too belongs to the world of the Greeks. In the birth of a *technē politikē*, we will not only see practical thought at work to determine what can rightfully be done, but also the traces of an *arkhē* scripture to constitute a knowledge of ruling in the reworking by *philosophia* of the ancient claim to

authority. We could also say that the Greek idea of sovereignty as a form of authority tied to *phusis* and the body of the sovereign, an authority issuing from the marks of superiority, lineage, and the signs that speak of the archaic divinities, will now be challenged by a knowledge of ruling that claims authority to be vested in the resemblance of justice, the form of the good, and the beautiful. It is the birth of the theme of the philosopher king in the presence of whom the shepherd is never far away. Under the theme of the philosopher king, a *technē politikē* will emerge as an art of ruling that seeks to guide the flock of men by means of wisdom and justice, an art of ruling that looks after the welfare of the *polis*, taking counsel for the *polis* as a whole with a view to its betterment. This *technē politikē* certainly concerns the steering of the ship of *polis*, rather than the souls of men, but one should not forget that the mechanism of this *technē politikē*, and the pivotal point that enables the steering of men aboard the ship of *polis*, is the mind.

§ 5 *Eleutheria* – Freedom and the Sheepfold

5.1. So, it all does not begin with the principle of sovereignty, the exclusion of ‘bare life’, and the birth of a power over life. The kind of power classical thought installs rather takes its model from the *stratia* and the *militia*, as the disciplines begin to function as correlates to an emergent sense of being political. This development, at the high point of which Aristotle would formulate the idea of life according to the good as the end of political community, has no relation to the sovereign *exceptio*. In fact, the dream of early political power is not about incarceration, confinement, or exclusion, but quite the opposite. It is about freedom [*eleutheria*]. Specifically, the idea of *to eu zēn* seems to emerge out of the horizon wherein the Greeks once encountered a certain state of deliverance. We can trace it in the discourse on *eleutheria*.

The Greek idea of *eleutheria* can be rendered as ‘liberty’ or ‘freedom’, if not quite in the modern meaning of the words. *Eleutheria* did not refer to a juridical of right conferred upon the subject and guaranteed by sovereignty and law, and by which the individual enters into a pact or contract giving up his natural right to govern himself, as in Hobbes, Rousseau, and Kant. The social contract of modern juridical power has no existence in classical Greece as a grid of intelligibility of freedom, which perhaps could lead to some confusion about the semantic field the term covered. It has been argued, for example, that *eleutheria* was understood as a kind of deliberative, autopoietic force that grows and develops towards its zenith according to its own internal law, as in the vegetal notion of flowering (Esposito 2006). While one could follow Esposito to read in *eleutheria* the connotation of flowering, this seems to be a derivation from a later representation of the word in which the sense of freedom acquires a familiarity with *eudaimonia* [happiness, flourishing], such as when Aristotle speaks of *eleutheros* or *politēs* [the free man] and the end of political community (Politics 1252b: 30). And yet, when Aristotle speaks of the happiness and flourishing of man in relation to freedom, it is not the expression of any kind of

self-unfolding process. What Aristotle has in mind is not to say that *eudaimonia* is a certain immanent force that delivers the free man over to the happiness of living well [eu zēn], but, on the contrary, that *eudaimonia* is conditioned upon a state of potentiality one must act upon; *eudaimonia* can only be brought about if certain practices of ruling and steering are observed, practices by which man must continuously bring about the state of deliverance. It is in this sense we must understand *eleutheria*, not as coterminous with *eudaimonia*, but rather as a condition of possibility for *eudaimonia* or life according to the good [to eu zēn].

At the beginning of the *Politics*, Aristotle says: "... every community is established with a view to some good; for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think good." (Ibid. 1252a: 1-3). While this passage is often discussed in terms of the sense, the modes, and the possible articulations of the good life, we must first, instead, direct our attention to the apparently insignificant verb 'act' [*agein*]. Recalling that we are at a point in time where the fundamental relationship between noun and verb has only recently been worked out, and only so in a rather rudimentary manner, what was understood by *agein* was certainly not the logic of action we take for granted in syntax when we speak of man acting in the world. In fact, as we go back less than a century before Aristotle, it is far from given that *agein* is applied in the sense of the primacy of *nous* and *logos*. As we have noted in the account of the archaic *hērōs*, for a long time *agein* on the contrary remained close to the meaning of *agōnistēs*. While we perhaps recognise *agōnistēs* as the substantive form of *agōnia* [struggle between equals or resemblances], in the archaic world, *agōnistēs* is a predication that refers to a condition of *phusis* rather than to the identity of a subject. In the archaic world, *agein* is disclosed in being as the emergent sway of the conjunction of opposites; *agōnia* is *phusis* engendered by the forces of *menis* and *thumos* so as to constitute *agein*. We could also say that action remains disclosed in war, that *agein* cannot be separated from the steering of men by *polemos*; in short, that the relationships of forces find their expression in war.

The classical idea of freedom [*eleutheria*] would in other words have made little sense at this point in time. Now, in Aristotle, the good life does not persist in actuality by itself. Hence the distinction between *to eu zēn* and *to zēn*. *To eu zēn* requires that potentiality passes over into the actuality of the good, which is

to say that life according to the good requires *agein* to come into being as actuality and persist in actuality. *Agein* will then be what separates actuality from potentiality where potentiality passes over into actuality from the articulation of act and potentiality. Here, it is important to note that for Aristotle, as Agamben rightfully shows while discussing the question of potentiality and law, potentiality is not simply a matter of the logical possibility of something passing over into actuality: "... if potentiality is to have its own consistency and not always disappear into actuality, it is necessary that potentiality be able *not* to pass over into actuality, that potentiality constitutively be the potentiality *not to* (do or be)." (1998: 45).⁹³ Given that potentiality also implies im-potentiality, then the passing over into actuality of the potentiality of the good requires, not only the possibility of action, but also the possibility of *no* act or, more precisely, it requires the figure of man who is capable of action as well as suspending his actions. In other words, it requires the existence of a certain sense of self, a self capable of a will of not realising an action; it requires the free man [*eleutheros*]. *Eleutheros*, Aristotle explains in the *Metaphysics* (982b: 25-26), is the man who by nature exists for his own sake and not for that of another. But one could also say that the free man exists for the sake of the good, since, for the good to be possible and not always disappear into the emergent sway of *polemos*, the free man must appear as the vehicle of action at the site where *agein* breaks free of the *agōnia* of *phusis* and moves into the *logos* to become conditioned upon the unmoved mind. *Agein* will then attain a meaning closer to conquest [*nikaō*] and antagonism [*neikos*] than to *agōnia*. Conquest and freedom will be part of the same political dream, as action is disclosed in the actuality of the good. Man is said to have conquered himself or to rule over himself, and only then will he be free. *Eleutheros* is he who is capable of arriving at a certain state of conquest, and the good is that state of conquest, which is freedom.

However, before *eleutheria* would be linked with *eudaimonia* in the notion of life according to the good, it has been in circulation for several centuries. In fact, the word is much older than classical discourse. It seems the first entry of the word in the literature appears with the name given to a feast or festival held

⁹³ Agamben quotes a passage from the *Metaphysics* (1046a: 32) in which Aristotle states: "Every potentiality is im-potentiality of the same with respect to the same".

in honour of Zeus Eleutherios [Zeus the Deliverer] after the victory over the Persians at the battle of Plataea (Smith et al. 1890). In its early etymological form, then, the Greek idea of freedom as *eleutheria* really has no relation to the form of the good, let alone any notion of a self-unfolding deliberative form of being or that of a juridical right conferred upon the citizen, in whom certain rights of freedom are 'preserved'. On the contrary, it tells a history of struggle and combat, of conquest and victory. When the Greeks speak of *eleutheria*, one should hear the distant roar of the battlefield; a discourse of war and violent death runs through the notion of freedom, the mind passing over the horizon of existence in the memory of lifeless bodies devoured by birds and dogs under the open sky as they descend into Hades. But one should also hear a discourse of military success and a celebration of the bond between *stratēgos* and *stratiōtēs*, *taxiarchos*, *enōmotarkhēs*, and *arkhōn* that, by the will of Zeus Eleutherios, assured the deliverance of the Greeks with the victory over the Persians.

The discourse on *eleutheria* in other words bares the markings of war, but not so much in the archaic sense of *agōnia*, the metope-like encounter of *hērōs* and *hērōs*. Although the relationship of war is certainly still recognised at the level of man-to-man struggle, the discourse on *eleutheria* seems to articulate this struggle around the vast division of a fundamental antagonism dividing Greeks against Persians, Hellenes against *barbaroi* [those who do not speak Greek]. From the Persian Wars to around the time of the Peloponnesian War, the discourse on freedom in other words seems to attain the connotation of the conquest of one race over the other, Hellenes over *barbaroi*, while, on the inside of the *polis*, the same sense of freedom appears at the site of the division between *eleutheros* [the free man] and *doulos* [the natural slave], articulating a binary division that runs through the whole of society. Now, while it is easy to claim that certain elements of racism are now present in the discourse on *eleutheria*, this may well miss the essential elements of both racism and the historical reality of classical Greece. It is important to note that when we find the discourse on race at the site of the *polis* and the *oikonomia*, it has little to do with the modern discourse on racism. Insofar as the distinction between *eleutheros* and *doulos* articulates a division of races, it has to do with little more than what is basically a relationship of dominance established through conquest.

We are in a relationship of dominance and submission, mastery and docility, albeit where the later condition is fit for no Greek.⁹⁴

What we must pay attention to in the discourse on freedom, and hence in the distinction between *eleutheros* and *doulos*, is in other words the logic of conquest, in particular, as it occurs in the shift in the practice of warfare where the military model overlays the old ways of the singular *polemistēs*. As the military model is invested in the relations of forces, conquest is no longer achieved by the deeds and acts of one man alone, demi-god or not. The state of deliverance cannot really exist in *agōnia* with its elaborate wills of individual warriors, its heterogeneous forces, and multiple divisions. What assures deliverance is the assemblage of forces of the *militia* and the *stratia*. *Eleutheria* in other words remains absent as long as the subjects have not submitted their wills to the command of the *arkhōn*, the *stratēgos*, or the *hēgemon* who then leads these otherwise heterogeneous forces to victory. We could also say, since it is basically the same logic we saw in Aristotle's reference to Homer, that the *politēs* remains absent so long as man, as in the conduct of Diomedes, has not renounced the friendship with war to discover war as a problem among his own folk. *Eleutheria* is tied to *neikos* rather than *agōnia*, then, which is how it occurs at the site of the vast division of two races, one pitted against the other, both struggling for *hēgemonia* and *arkhē*.

Domination or submission, mastery or docility, freedom or servitude, this is the great division that runs through the discourse of *eleutheria* and whose end point is the necessity of conquest. The *telos* of conquest is the promise of freedom, not simply because it establishes the dissymmetrical relation of victor over vanquished, but because it establishes order on both sides of the division as the relationship of subject and ruling element found in the *arkhē*. The conquest therefore assures *harmonia*; on the inside, men are no longer engaged in the day-to-day warfare with one another because of the relationship between master and slave, while, on the outside, the relations of forces are invested in the great war and united in the common good of freedom. In fact, in the

⁹⁴ As Aristotle explains in a passage of the *Politics* where he discusses the problem of slavery and conquest: "... the Hellenes do not like to call Hellenes slaves, but confine the term to barbarians [barbaroi]." (*Politics* 1255a: 25-29).

discourse on freedom, as we find it in Isocrates, the conquest will now promise to bring an end to the great war that, despite the division between master and slave, has appeared among fellow Greeks. Writing in the course of the Peloponnesian War, in his *Panegyricus* Isocrates calls on Sparta to establish concord [harmonia] in Greece by recourse to the practice of conquest. In his plea for reconciling Athens and Sparta, Isocrates proposes an expedition led by the Athenians and the Spartans, “gathered together in the cause of the liberty [eleutheria] of our allies, dispatched by all Greece, and faring forth to wreak vengeance on the barbarians” (Panegyricus: 185). Also, in his letter *To Philip*, an appeal to the King of Macedonia, Isocrates once again proposes for the Hellenes to follow the command [arkhein] of the Macedonian king in a conquest of Persia reuniting the Greeks in the common cause of *eleutheria*. By then, what once appeared on the desolate plains of Plataea in the blood and mud of battle now seems to have acquired its own form, a form whose *telos* compels that the conquest be carried onto ever-greater and more distant battlefields, since the state of deliverance cannot be found but in the finality of the last battle. It is in this schema of freedom and conquest, we find the great Alexander who got lost in India, and the Caesars of Rome who dreamt in the halls of their palaces of becoming emperor of all the world.

Now, this idea of freedom, to which the Greeks alluded by the word *eleutheria*, begins to appear in discourses that are neither directly linked with festival and the honouring of Zeus nor with the unification of the Hellenes against the Persians. It is one of the beguiling morphologies that seems to appear during the classical period, one that cannot be reduced to the event of the Persian Wars, and yet, nevertheless, always seems to refer back to the birth of the military model, which is doubled and multiplied in the chain of resemblances. In fact, it is precisely the schema of the military model that will guides Aristotle when he now speaks of mankind acting in order to obtain that which they think good. The good appears at the site where action [agein] ties together the division between master and slave by recourse to the principle of conquest. It is important to note that this is not the expression of the division of life by sovereign power though. We are a long way from a form of austerity that would tend to reduce the slave to ‘bare life’. Although excluded from political

life, the slave never appears at the site of incarceration and confinement or as life that may be killed. In fact, the slave does not appear because he has violated the sovereign law, but because he has found himself in the unfortunate event of a struggle in which he has come to surrender to the master. The division that appears here is in other words the one that occurs through war, the division which *is* war, the ineradicable basis of all social relations where some individuals are disclosed as free [eleutherous] and others as *doulous* [slaves]. It is the harmony of opposites of which everything is made and held together. In fact, the master and the slave are not recognised as divorced entities, but as an assemblage forming a relationship (Politics 1252b).

It is from the enjoinder of this relationship of master and slave, made possible by the conquest, that the possibility of the good now comes to light. Specifically, the good comes into being as the effect of the actions of the master who from his position as a free man guides or rules over the actions of the slave. Just as the rudder serves as the 'lifeless instrument' of the pilot for his steering of the ship, and the lookout man as a 'living instrument', Aristotle says, so the natural slave is 'a kind of instrument' of the master in his management of the *oikonomia* (Ibid. 1253b: 26-33). In this sense, and just as the pilot's steering of the ship depends on the actions that guide the rudder and the lookout man, the possibility of life according to the good, both in the sense of the excellence of the master's management of the *oikonomia* and in the more general sense, depends on the slave and his ability to carry out the actions of the master. In fact, no man, Aristotle says, can live well [eu zēn] unless he be provided with such necessities: "For if every instrument could accomplish its own work, obeying or anticipating the will of others, like the statues of Daedalus, or the tripods of Hephaestus, which, says the poet, 'of their own accord entered the assembly of the Gods'; if, in like manner, the shuttle would weave and the plectrum touch the lyre without a hand to guide them, chief workmen would not want servants, nor masters slaves." (Ibid. 1253b: 23-39; 1254). Since only a few instruments, such as the self-moving tripods of Hephaestus (the only Greek god who worked, and who is honoured in the *Homeric Hymn to Hephaestus* for having taught mankind that work is noble) serving the gods at feasts, can anticipate the will of others, life according to the good cannot come into being outside of the relationship of

master and slave. Conversely, since the rudder will not steer the ship without the command of the pilot, the good always seems to require the rule of command. It requires that the practice of ruling be carried out, which involves certain strategic measures of mind not unlike the kind of which Aristotle speaks in the *Politics* where he likens the practice of politics to a game of draughts: "For that which can foresee with the mind is the naturally ruling and naturally mastering element, while that which can do these things with the body is the naturally ruled and slave." (Ibid. 1252a: 31-35).

It is clear that this economy of the good, upon which the subsistence of life is articulated, happens without an *arkhē* scripture to which the exchanges of men would come to owe their law. The unit that guides action is not the code of law, but rather that of rank, authority, and discipline. What demarcates the threshold of life according to the good is not the suspension of law then, but rather a *technē* of ruling that takes as its principle the disciplines of the military model. Like the *stratia* and the *militia*, the *oikonomia* emerges as a strategic space in which action is guided and steered by the *arkhōn* or, more precisely, by the *despotēs* [head of a family] and the *oikonomos* [head of an estate]. The *oikonomia* appears as a kind of field of intervention in which the management by the *oikonomos* is realised through the conjunction of certain strategic interventions and certain calculations of action articulated around the schema of master and slave, dominance and submission. *Oikonomia*, then, is a strategic schema of the subsistence of life, a principle of intelligibility if you will, that manifests a certain regulatory idea of the good. This is far from saying that the *oikonomia* reads as part of an abstract category of life. On the contrary, *oikonomia* consists in the assemblage of instruments for the realisation of living well. *Oikonomia* is the manifestation of *technē*, and only secondly a principle of intelligibility of reality for a political thought that is seeking the rationality of an art of government based on the good. Insofar as the idea of life according to the good manifests itself as a certain governmental reason, then, it is not articulated around a division of spheres of life, but rather on the resemblance of a series of relationships of opposites. Master and slave, public and private constitute relationships that in fact rely on the same taxonomy of ruling, as expressed in the recurrence of the terms *arkhein* and *kratein*, *kubernaō* and *oiakizō*, which

appear in both the discourse on the *oikonomia*, the *stratia*, and the *bios politikos*. As Plato explains at length in books II through V of the *Republic*, the soul of man is like the *polis* wherefore the same structure should prevail in him. This is also how the practice of ruling the *oikonomia* (the cultivation of a domain, the maintenance and development of an estate) was considered as an important part of the *paideia* of the free man in his preparation for the practice of politics and the fulfilment of his civic obligations. The *oikonomia*, the *stratia*, and the *bios politikos* are tied together in the ruling principle, as the articulation of the principle of conquest with the activity of steering things towards an end. In each case, the unit of domination is rank and the unit of order that of resemblance.

The idea of life according to the good does not rest on a certain form of 'politically qualified' life then. *To eu zēn* has in fact little to do with what we call politics. Whereas Plato and Aristotle can certainly speak of the 'happiness of the *polis*' (Laws 628: d-e; Politics 1278b: 29), this does not imply that life according to the good appears the level of politics. It is rather so that the *bios politikos* exists for the sake of good life, as Aristotle says. The maintenance of the city-walls, the facilitation of the *agorā*, contests, education, and so on, it is in this sense we must understand Aristotle when he discusses the idea of living well in relation to the *polis*, as it appears in his discussion of good constitutions (Politics 1279a-1280a). This is equally true in Plato. In the perfect *polis* governed by moderation, as we find it in the *Republic* and in the *Laws*, the good life does not really spring from the level of political life. To say that the *polis* provides for the happiness of man would not really make sense, since the souls and bodies of men, with their elaborate wills and desires, have yet to submit their 'right to govern themselves' and become usurped in Hobbes' God-sovereign. As we have seen, happiness is precisely a matter of governing oneself and others by means of moderation, that is, by means of day-to-day conquests. This is not to say that happiness cannot come into being before all men are brought to observe the principle of moderation. As Foucault explains, quoting Plato in the *Republic*: "In the moderate state, the passions of the unprincipled multitude would be controlled by 'the desires and knowledge of the fewer and the better'." (Foucault 1992: 62). As we have seen, happiness occurs precisely because the natural slave speaks the language of the unruly body, and the temperate soul that of

order. So long as the free man remains free, so long as the master remains master by virtue of being capable of ruling over his appetites as if they were his slaves, the servile 'instruments' of the mind, order and happiness persist. This is how, by contrast, order breaks down in the event of the immoderate man who is a slave of his passions. This is because the man who lacks moderation is neither capable of ruling himself nor his slaves and his household, as Xenophon explains in *Oeconomicus* (I: 22-23) where he likens the mismanaged household to the state of the disorganised soul. That is, there is a perfect correspondence between the states of order in which the free man must keep his soul, his slaves, and his household, as the ruling principle is doubled and multiplied in an infinite series of analogies and resemblances so as to constitute order.

5.2. But did this *technē* of ruling that seems to materialise a certain idea of freedom simply manifest itself in the exteriority of concrete actions then, the exteriority of ruling men as an art of rank articulating a schema of discipline with the practice of conquest? It is important to note that while there is no *arkhē* scripture and no one God-sovereign to command the flock of souls, the logic of this schema of domination-submission and command-obedience did not solely apply to the exteriority of concrete actions. Remember that for the free man to live well, acting in accordance with the good and the noble, he must be capable of suspending his own actions or, more precisely, he must be capable of conquering the sway of *phusis* to let the mind determine the course of action. While it is clear that one cannot speak of this practice in terms of the interiority of the government of souls, as in the pastoral model of power, it is clear that we are not dealing with an exclusively extrospective schema that solely exists in the domain of real and actual practices deployed upon the natural slave by an equally true master. The *technē* of ruling must be understood in terms of the resemblance articulated in the military model, which, as we have seen, relies on the quintessential introspective practice of ruling over the soul; the conquering of *phusis* and the primacy of the mind forcing their way into the ordering codes of culture and the reflection upon order itself at which point it becomes clear, as Aristotle says in the *Politics*, "... that the rule of the soul over the body, and the rational element [logos] over the passionate [pathētikos], is natural and expedient." (1254b: 5-6). One will notice then that the position occupied by the

Logos to guide action in the archaic world, where *agein* is disclosed in being as the emergent sway of the conjunction of opposites, has moved into the soul of man. This is how we must understand the relationship between action and the principle of moderation, and this is what Aristotle has in mind when he says that man must hold to the 'right mean' between insensitivity and excess, indifference and self-indulgence, choosing reasonable principles of action:

The temperate man occupies a middle position with regard to these objects [of desire]. For he neither enjoys the things that the self-indulgent man enjoys most – but rather dislikes them – nor in general the things that he should not, nor anything of this sort to excess, nor does he feel pain or craving when they are absent, or does so only to a moderate degree, and no more than he should, nor when he should not, and so on... he will desire moderately and as he should. (Nicomachean Ethics 1119a: 10-18).

At the site of the mean, *Logos* and *agein* now appear from the vantage point of the soul whose mind has become a principle of order. It is from this position of mean that order becomes visible. In fact, there can be no order without this sense of self, which rules the soul by means of conquest in order to steer things from the proper place of mean, at which point of intersection things now assume their similarities and make their agreements. Must we follow Heidegger then and speak of this soul in terms of metaphysics or an onto-theology? Perhaps, but it seems to me that we should rather pay attention to the problem that arises with this model of the soul. In the perpetual spiritual combat of the *politikon zōon*, the soul must now answer to the sway of *agōnia*. Instead of an *arkhē* scripture, there will be the permanent danger that the order of things escapes the grasp of the *logos* and lapses into war. Man will appear in this middle region, where he has taken over the steering of things, but at the expense that he too becomes responsible for *polemos*. It is the appearance of a kind of middle region where, on the one hand, man must abandon the premises of *phusis* to seek out action in the abeyance of the unmoved mind, and, on the other, he must confront *phusis* and by means of *logos* situate the soul at the 'in-between', the site of a fleeting articulation which will only be reconciled in the commandment and origin of God. The site of the mean will read as the promise

of freedom, but this freedom will come at the expense that all the weight of the world be placed on it, since *phusis* must always exhaust itself in the *logos* in order to constitute the kind of order in which reality must be shown to be of the same nature as the schema of the conquest. Freedom will necessitate recurrent conquest, because as long as man appear at the site of the intermediary position of *polemos* – as long as the *logos* is believed to appear in the soul at the intersection of the mind and the appetites – these contrary forces pull him in opposite directions as he struggles to steer them by command. It is indeed a difficult path to follow, Aristotle explains, for ‘if appetites are strong and violent they even expel the power of calculation’, which is why ‘they should be moderate and few, and should in no way oppose the rational principle’ (Ibid. 1117b: 22-1119b: 19).

It is clear, then, that the government of self cannot simply be understood as a matter of the stylised attitudes of a *technē tou biou*, a *technē* of living where action would only occur in its concrete realisation and appear in its visible and manifest form. In fact, what guides practical thought to determine what can rightfully be done relies on the truth of the mind. Moreover, it seems this *technē* articulates an essential irrationality, a permanent state of disequilibrium; freedom is at one at the same time what must occur at the end of this struggle and that, which cannot persist but from the continuous interventions of conquest, which, as we leave the battlefield of the mind and enter into the reality of concrete actions, is bound to invite new wars to be waged around the division of master and slave. The incorporeality of the permanent spiritual combat of the soul will be mirrored by the corporeality of struggling bodies engaged in perpetual conquest. Unlike the archaic form of combat, as the temporally limited form of the sway of *phusis*, the exaltation of affect, there really is no end to this struggle in which the soul must answer to the idea of freedom and the form of conquest. It is the outbreak of a certain kind of war that begins to appear on the inside of the *polis* where the exchanges of free men are to take place. It seems we find the first account of this war in a passage of the *Laws*. Here, it appears in close connection to the resemblance between the mind, the strategic schema of the *militia*, and the laws of Spartan society. Discussing Spartan and Cretan laws, Cleinias says to the Athenian: “... the Cretan legislator

established every one of our institutions, both in the public sphere and the private, with an eye on war, and that this was the spirit in which he gave us his laws for us to keep up. He was convinced that if we don't come out on top in war, nothing that we possess or do in peace-time is of the slightest use..." (Laws 626a-c). For, says Cleinias of the Cretan legislator only a few lines earlier: "In this [legislation], I think, he censured the stupidity of ordinary men, who do not understand that they are all engaged in a never-ending lifelong war against all other city-states." (Ibid. 625e). The *polis* is engaged in a perpetual war among *poleis*. The Athenian does not dispute this. In fact, the war among *poleis* is not of any particular concern to Plato. For there is another kind of war, the Athenian explains to Cleinias, a war that is much worse than the one against an external enemy. In fact, this kind of war "... is the last thing a man would want to see". It is the war, which stems from the "war against ourselves within each one of us", the war in which each one of us is either the 'conqueror of' or 'conquered by', the Athenian explains.

In a passage, which Hobbes may have had in mind when he defined the principle of the state of nature, we find the famous idea on which terrain the principle of sovereign power in time would occur: "... everyone [is] an enemy of everyone else in the public sphere," Plato has Cleinias saying, as he identifies *polemos*, not in terms of *agōnia*, but at the site of perpetual enmity [*neikos*] and conquest [*nikaō*] (Ibid. 626d-628a). A battlefield runs through the whole of Classical Greek society, continuously and permanently, as the struggle for domination divides it against itself, pitting one man against the other. But this is clearly no longer the kind of war once discovered in the friendship with war. *Agōnia* no longer has a positive relation to action [*agein*]. On the contrary, action cannot seem to find an expression outside of the relationship of *neikos*, the conquest of the self and the other. Man is called upon to rule over his soul, but it is for the same reason that revolts and revolutions become still more numerous.

So we find Aristotle devoting the entire book V of the *Politics* to the problem of revolts and revolutions, in particular, in relation to forms of government. While the *arkhē* rules both man and *kosmos*, since the conquest is the condition of possibility of freedom the free man cannot seem to find a form of government, which will enable *harmonia* and hence the perfect community

devoted to life according to the good. One is always the 'conqueror of' or 'conquered by' wherefore these tense force relations cannot seem to find a form of government that will render them stable:

Now, in oligarchies the masses make revolution under the idea that they are unjustly treated, because, as I said before, they are equals, and have not an equal share, and in democracies the notables revolt, because they are not equals, and yet have only an equal share. Again, the situation of cities is a cause of revolution when the country is not naturally adapted to preserve the unity of the state. For example, the Chytians at Clazomenae did not agree with the people of the island; and the people of Colophon quarrelled with the Notians... For just as in war the impediment of a ditch, though ever so small, may break a regiment, so every cause of difference, however slight, makes a breach in a city. (Politics 1303b: 5-16).

While initially drawing up the schism of the oligarchic and democratic models of ruling, Aristotle finds that both are prone to revolts and even revolutions. This is because the government of self and the order of *arkhē* basically constitute a system of rank, which is at rest only when it is on the move, an 'unmoved movement' whose constraint consist precisely in being a vector of movement, and whose endpoint is the battle and the clash of opposite forces. In other words, so long as there is no political structure to end the war and maintain the dissymmetry established by the last conquest, this system cannot avoid revolt and revolution. Aristotle's metaphor about the falling apart of the ranks of the regiment, as an image of the fragility of the political order of the *polis*, should therefore be taken quite literally. There seems to be no, or at least very little, political structure to give the power to one side in the struggle and establish a permanent relationship of force. The steering of the ranks of the *stratia* and the ruling of the *polis* are in other words subject to the fundamental problem that occurs, as things must find their resemblance in the *arkhē* and the division into subject and ruling element. For while all things must answer to their true identity of either subject or ruling element, it seems the weaker will not submit to the stronger, just as the ignorant will never give up in the struggle against the wise man. The weaker will declare himself the equal of the stronger, while the stronger will never give up his position as master. This is the safe rule,

Thucydides says while balancing the scales of power: "... to stand up to one's equals, to behave with deference towards one's superiors, and to treat one's inferiors with moderation [sōphrosynē]" (V.111). But the safe rule is precisely the rule of war because both man and *polis* strive to prevent inferiors from becoming equals, and equals from gaining the upper hand and becoming superiors, as well as making sure that superiors do not become too dominant. The safe rule of mind in other words always seems to become entangled in the play of *polemos* where it cannot assert itself and finally conquer *phusis* to give the power to political man. Man cannot seem to get away from *polemos*, as the one whose desire is ruled by war breaks the regiments of the *stratia* and tears down the city walls from the inside. The war that goes on at all times in the relationships of forces is intensified as the necessity of conquest, articulated around the difference between subject and ruling element, will continue to be reinvested in the relationships of forces as the principle of order. War will then be waged on the basis of slight differences.⁹⁵

So, while Aristotle takes the greatest care to explain how the relationship of master and slave is given by nature, as constituted in the *arkhē* of *kosmos*, the strategic schema of ruling and subject element, of victor and vanquished, cannot seem to function as a stable form of order in the *polis*. Again, this is because no equals can be found in a system of rank where the freedom and action of one man will only be had from the conquest of the other. Aristotle realises this. The problem is how to avoid the conquest among the ones who are supposed to be equals or, better yet, how to eliminate the law of conquest, which, in the relations among free men, seems threaten the possibility of living well and the end of political community. Therefore, in a passage of the *Politics*, we find

⁹⁵ When looking at the causes for waging war against cities and individuals, we can see how these 'slight differences', Aristotle speaks of, come into play. Not that the Greeks would lay waste to armies and burn cities to the ground because of minor insults, quarrels, or light skirmishes, nonetheless, such events would often be sufficient 'causes' for waging war. When, for example, Sparta declared war on Elis in 402 BC, it was to reassert itself on the grounds of the allegedly disrespectful treatment Elis had given Sparta over the subsequent 20 years. That is, the Eleans had banned the Spartans from competing in the Olympic games in 420 BC, and publicly whipped a prominent Spartan who in defiance of the ban had surreptitiously entered a team for the chariot race. This episode taken together with a second, where the Eleans had denied the Spartan king Agis the right to perform a sacrifice at the altar of Zeus, were sufficient grounds for Sparta to declare war. According to van Wees, there are numerous accounts of similar incidents (2004: 24).

Aristotle discussing the conquest in relation to the problem of slavery. Here, Aristotle is careful to explain that one must distinguish between two meanings of slavery. There is the 'slave by nature' and then there is the 'slave by law', that is, the law of conquest; "the law by which whatever is taken in war is supposed to belong to the victors." (Politics 1255a: 5-7). Having discerned the taxonomy of slaves in terms of custom and nature, Aristotle then proceeds to refute the idea of slavery by custom by posing the problem of conquest in terms of the virtue of justice [dikē]: "Others, clinging, as they think, simply to a principle of justice (for law and custom are a form of justice), assume that slavery in accordance with the custom of war is justified by law, but at the same moment they deny this. For what if the cause of the war be unjust?" (Ibid. 1255a: 21-24).

If the cause of the war is unjust, Aristotle explains, then the subordination of men by means of conquest is equally unjust and happens against nature. For what is a most unjust and against nature is the desire to make the man a slave 'who is unworthy to be a slave'. This is also why "... Hellenes do not like to call Hellenes slaves, but confine the term to barbarians." (Ibid. 1255a: 25-29). By nature, on the contrary, the superior in virtue rules over the natural slave and, in doing so, he does nothing but exercise his superiority in virtue thus realising the relationship of dominance already given by nature. The free man does not rule over the one who is unworthy to be a slave, because no relationship of slavery can exist among men of equal excellence and virtue. This is why, by nature, the superior in virtue conquers only himself and the inferior in virtue. In fact, conquest or no conquest, it is all the same, Aristotle says, because what matters is what is higher in virtue, and what is higher in virtue is to follow the principle of justice. Justice, then, provides the solution to the problem of free men conquering other free men. It is the principle according to which slavery by law of conquest is excluded from the *polis* while, at the same time, being the principle upon which, through a simultaneous inclusion, the relationship of master and natural slave enables the *oikonomia* as a practice of living well. Thus Aristotle neutralises the problem of conquest by affirming the originarity of the principle of justice.

It is basically the same argument we find in Plato in the passage where he discusses the war of every man against every man in the public sphere. The war

in which everyone is enemy of everyone else must be warded off precisely by recourse to the principle of justice. But how must we understand this sense of justice [*dikē*]; what is the genealogy of the term and how can it provide an effective solution to the problem of war and conquest? In the *Republic*, we never find an actual account of *dikē*. In Socrates, *dikē* seems to refer to the specific constitution and founding conditions of each *polis*.⁹⁶ Yet, *dikē* is neither an element found within the *polis* nor a property of man. In Plato and Xenophon, it seems *dikē* is rather understood as a virtue that sustains and perfects the other three cardinal virtues, wisdom, moderation, and courage.⁹⁷ In fact, *dikē* seems to be the cause of the other virtues being the result of the 'well-ordered' soul; *dikē* is what occurs as the effect of the soul bringing itself to be in accordance with the ruling principle. This is how, on the contrary, if the soul is in a state of disorder and in discord with the ruling principle, man will be 'inferior' in his actions and prone to the causes of sin – appetite, spiritedness, and ignorance [*agnoia*] – that will rule him making him unjust. This is often the case in 'bad or corrupted natures', Aristotle explains, where, "... the body will often appear to rule over the soul, because they are in a wretched and unnatural condition." (*Politics* 1254a: 39; 1254b: 1-2). Basically, it is the same logic that guides the Athenian in the *Laws* (863b-c), as he explains how one must distinguish between justice and injustice [*adikia*]:

The domination of passion and fear and pleasure and pain and envies and desires in the soul, whether they do any injury or not, I term generally 'injustice'; but the belief in the highest good – in whatsoever way either cities or individuals think they can attain to it, – if this prevails in their souls and regulates every man, even if some damage be done, we must assert that everything thus done is just, and that in each man the part subject to this governance is also just, and best for the whole life of mankind... (863e-864a).

⁹⁶ In example, Plato draws on the 'earth born' myth according to which men believe that they are born from the earth and from birth have a certain nature they are destined to fulfill. Accordingly, Socrates arrives at his definition of justice as that of man "working at that which he is naturally best suited," and "to do one's own business and not to be a busybody" (*Republic* 433a-433b).

⁹⁷ In *Cyropaedia* (VIII), Xenophon also describes justice as one among five virtues, the other four being wisdom, courage, piety, and moderation, and in book IV of Plato's *Republic* (430e) we find a similar taxonomy of justice, courage, wisdom, and moderation.

The well-ordered soul, then, is what provides men with the sense of justice. But the soul, as we saw, is precisely the site of war and conquest, in which it never seems to be able to bring itself in a permanent state of order. *Dikē* is subverted by that ‘one element in the soul that cannot be conquered’, spiritedness, “which is an inbred quality of a contentious and pugnacious kind, and one that overturns many things by its irrational force.” (Ibid. 863b). It happens then that man has no sense of justice in which case, Aristotle says, he is “... the most unholy and the most savage of animals, and the most full of lust [aphrodisia] and gluttony.” (Politics 1253a: 36-37).

Dikē seems to concern a matter of virtue [*arētē*] then. But is this sense of virtue not precisely what enables the logic of conquest in the first place; is it not the very principle that supports it? Indeed, but how must we then understand the line of reasoning we find in Plato and Aristotle? Clearly, it is not likely the expression of an accidental tautological error or a contradiction in terms that now shows up in the two master thinkers of the classical period, so what is at stake in this paradoxical conviction that *harmonia* is to be found in *arētē* in the sense of the very principle of ‘the war against ourselves within each one of us’? As we have seen, the idea of *arētē* is not without a history of its own. In its archaic setting, *arētē* occurs in close proximity with *arēios*, the adjective form of *Arēs*, expressing the highest praise that places the strife of the *polemistēs* among the deeds and acts of gods. In Plato, however, we have seen how the meaning of *arētē* seems to undergo a remarkable transformation. *Arētē* is transposed from the planes of Troy and the ancient ritual of chariot fighting to reappear beyond *phusis* in the realm of the struggling soul at which site it is understood as the virtue of conquering oneself. Virtue and excellence will then resemble quite the opposite of archaic *arētē*, namely, the virtue of *sōphrosynē*. We should also recall how this displacement of archaic *arētē* occurs in the *Republic* where Plato dedicates almost the entire treatise to persuading Polemarchus [war leader] and his band of warriors about the truth of this unusual resemblance, the resemblance wherein *arētē* is brought to adhere to the *eidos* of *sōphrosynē*, which must then be imitated in the domain of the real.

Finally, we must keep in mind how Aristotle, in his predication of man as a *politikon zōon*, is most concerned to show that the sense of *arētē* attributed to

the friendship of war must in fact be considered as something wholly unnatural, the expression of the domination of desire by war. Also, we must keep in mind how the tragedians seem to agree, as the archaic *hērōs* turns up as the disordered player of the Same and the Other, exposed in his delusional intensities. In fact, this trajectory provides a first clue to what is at stake in Plato and Aristotle. When we find the archaic *hērōs* in Aristotle, he clearly seems hopelessly outmoded and reduced to his own fury. Yet, in his account of man as a *politikon zōon*, the philosopher still bothers to conjure up this corrupted image of the archaic warrior. That is to say, Aristotelian and Platonic discourse on virtue seems to appear on the historical terrain of a certain struggle, where the sense of virtue associated with the warrior is contested, displaced, and reversed. All this is to say that if we are to understand what is at stake in the concern in Plato and Aristotle about the conquest, and their conviction to make the virtue of *dikē* the arbiter of the war of every man against every man, then we must seek to inquire further into the historical reality in which we find the discourse on conquest and *arētē*. It seems to me that this discourse begins to appear in the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, which, according to Thucydides, was perhaps the single greatest event the Greek world had seen.

The defeat of Athens by Sparta had manifested itself and continued to do so in many ways. The Spartan conquest was the stigmata of the foreign presence that seems to have produced a long-standing division. Under the rule of The Thirty Tyrants, the pro-Spartan oligarchy installed in Athens after its defeat in the war, the Athenians did not enjoy the same rights as their conquerors. This is the context in which we first find the discourse on the conquest that claims the resemblance of *arētē* and *dikē*. Now, *arētē* was the very mark of Spartan authority, but not in the sense of *dikē* it now begins to attain on the side of the vanquished. As the threshold to the classical period is crossed with the Peloponnesian War, an obvious disparity has emerged in the meaning attributed to *arētē*. In fact, this is already apparent in the classical tragedians' discovery of heroic rage as disorder and madness. In the classical poets, but also in Herodotus, we can see the divide widening, as in Herodotus' account of Aristodemus where he praises the warrior for an archaic sense of *arētē* now denounced by the Spartans. Some fifty years later Plato then manages to make

arētē resemble *sōphrosynē*, a resemblance that would have been impossible in the archaic world, and which still seems controversial and worthy of dispute, as attested to in the probing and interrogative discourse of the Athenian. However, as we seen, this complete reversal of the archaic sense of *arētē* we find in Plato is not so much to be attributed to the erudition of *philosophia* that has begun to read the world and the fiction of *eidos* as parts of the same text. Rather, the disparity that occurs in the meaning of *arētē* seems to have been given birth to, in particular, by the Spartan practice of *askēsis*. While the archaic sense of *arētē* was strongly admired by the Spartan warrior aristocracy, we have seen how archaic *arētē* was in fact rather contradictory to the principle of steering the *militia* and the herding of boys in the practice of *paideia*; the pure catatonic display of force brings a rupture to bear on the relationships of forces making no steering possible. This ambiguous ontological status now found in *arētē*, where archaic *arētē* is yet admired, but becoming increasingly difficult to praise as virtue, now turns against the victors of the Peloponnesian War.

The Athenians take aim at the heart of this disparity in a counter-attack to destroy the remains of the archaic resemblance of *arētē*, *bia* [force], and *kratos* [power] as a claim to political authority [dunamis te politikē]. What is at stake in Platonic and Aristotelian discourse on *dikē*, then, is not simply the mere threat of the war of every man against every man. Rather, it concerns the actual and manifest form of the Spartan conquest and its exigencies. In fact, this is what guides Aristotle in the *Politics* when he says that slavery in accordance with the custom of war is the expression of *adikia*. It is how the desire to make the man a slave ‘who is unworthy to be a slave’ is in fact not only unjust, but also ‘fit for no Greek’. The discourse on *dikē*, as we find it Plato and Aristotle, does not concern the simple matter of the well-ordered soul then, but the very principle of power. It is the contestation of the ancient claim to authority [dunamis] of force [*bia*, *kratos*] issuing from the archaic warrior aristocracy. Here, it is essential to note that the word ‘*bia*’ was not, as asserted by Agamben, understood in terms of certain moral codes, that is, as ‘violence’. The moral transcription of physical force is not carried out before the birth of pastoral power where weakness will become a virtue.

When busying oneself with the Greeks, one should in other words keep in mind that ‘what is higher in rank is what is stronger’, as Heidegger says in the *Introduction to Metaphysics* (2000: 141). In the strict sense, then, *bia* denotes the kind of force one associates with the strength and vigour which is written on the body of warrior and displayed in *makhē* [combat]. Homer sometimes uses the word interchangeably with *kratos* [dominance] in the sense of expressing the physical power to defeat or subdue an opponent. Here, we can see the very tangible sense attributed to power at this point in time. To the Greeks, the physical power of dominance [kratos] resembles the ability or capability to exercise authority. When this resemblance of the claim to authority occurs, we often find the mark of superiority tied to signs of divine origin. So Alexander, king of Macedon, would assert *dunamis* [authority] by claiming decadency from Heracles, having led the Greeks to victory at the Battle of Plataea. It is the articulation of authority as lineage in the seizure of signs that resemble the martial divinities; *arētē*, *kratos*, and *bia*. Far from expressing a certain pastoral sense of injustice, *kratos* and *bia* are seen as the basis of *dunamis* rather than as confined to the semantic sphere of violence. By the time Plato and Aristotle write their political treatises, this basically has not changed. In the *Gorgias* (484b: 1-10), Plato is therefore not really concerned with a deliberation on *dikē* and *bia* in the sense of the ‘sovereign confusion of justice and violence’, as Agamben tells us (1998: 35). What is at stake in both Aristotle and Plato (though more so in Plato, since this is in fact a theme in both the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*) is rather the intrinsically politico-strategic attempt of contesting and supplanting the physiognomic claim to authority of *bia* and *kratos*, issuing from the signs written on the body of the warrior, or, in the scorning language of Aristotle, the one whose desire is ruled by war.

This political strategy appears most obviously in Plato’s discourse on the tyrant (*Republic* 577d). In Plato, the tyrant is essentially the archaic warrior having become king. Like the warrior, the tyrant is seemingly unable to rule over *thumos* and *epithumia*. In particular in book IX of the *Republic*, we learn how the tyrant’s lack of self-mastery and desire for self-indulgence are irreconcilable with the ruling of the *polis*, making him a threat to political community. His rule results in *adikia* and the suffering of the famous innocents

who died at break of day. Appearing in the aftermath of the civil war that followed the Peloponnesian War with the rule of The Thirty Tyrants, Platonic discourse on *bia* is basically a discourse that tries to cut off the tyrant's head.⁹⁸ But it is also the discourse of the vanquished, a discourse spoken by pious men of virtue and self-mastery who now hold the tyrant accountable for the disparity found in *arētē*. *Arētē* cannot both resemble *bia* and *sōphrosynē*, force and self-restraint, but must be located on the right side of the division that has now appeared in the rift inflicted on the social body by the war. It is the strategic mobilisation of *arētē* as *sōphrosynē*, the practice of self-mastery as a weapon in a war over the claim to authority; it is the deployment of the principle of an *askēsis* in the attempt to displace the axis of authority in a complete reversal of the ancient hierarchy of strength.

Specifically, in the ruling of the *polis*, in fact in all kinds of ruling, man must answer, not to the virtue of *bia* and *kratos* or divine origin, but to the kind of virtue that issues from the disciplines of the practice of *askēsis*, namely, the urgency of *dikē*. Returning to the dialogue in the *Laws*, where Plato discusses the war of every man against every man, we can see that this is precisely what the Athenian has in mind as he confronts the problem of conquest. The wise legislator must seek to ward off the war of every man against every man, either by 'putting the virtuous in command' or by reconciling the individuals 'by laying down regulations to guide them', the Athenian explains as he draws on an analogy to the *oikos* and the quarrelling family (Laws 626d-628a). This sense of virtuousness, which also defines the regulations to guide men, is derived from the kind of authority in which *dunamis te politikē* is what emerges from *dikē*, *sōphrosynē*, and the kind of wisdom [phronēsis] that belongs to the sound mind. We are not talking about juridical categories then. We are rather at the state that precedes the birth of the categories of a certain jurisprudence. As we learn in Plato's elaboration on justice in the *Republic*, *dikē* is tied to the self-relationship of the sound mind in its relation to the *eidos* of the highest good.

⁹⁸ In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates recounts an incident in which the Thirty once ordered him (and four other men) to bring before them Leon of Salamis, a man supposedly known for his justice and upright character, for execution. While the other four men obeyed, Socrates refused, not wanting to partake in the guilt of the executioners. By disobeying, Socrates knew he was placing his own life in jeopardy, and claimed it was only the disbanding of the oligarchy soon afterwards that saved his life (*Apology* 32c-d).

Although Plato never offers an exhaustive explanation of the relationship between the good, *dikē*, and the mind, we can see that *dikē* seems derived from the form of the highest good, and, in this form, justice resembles the soundness of mind of the well-ordered soul. This is how, eventually, it will be found in that only such well-ordered soul can acquire the proper knowledge of ruling, since what allows man to rule is neither *bia* nor *kratos*, but rather the conjunction of knowledge and virtue enabling the wise ruler to grasp and pursue the highest good. It is the birth of a new resemblance of *dunamis te politikē*, a new circularity of the claim to authority, if you like. It is the entry into the relationships of forces of the idea of political authority as a certain abstract form of power articulated by the resemblance *dikē-sōphrōn-sōphrosynē*, a form of power and authority that is higher in rank than the ancient resemblance of *bia-kratos-arētē*.

This is how we must understand Plato's preoccupation in the *Laws* with the war of every man against every man. The claim to authority of *dikē-sōphrōn-sōphrosynē* relies precisely on the suspension of the war in which *bia* and *kratos* constitute *arētē*. In fact, this form of power and authority cannot come into being without the suspension of the corporeality of this war that governs the exchanges of men. The suspension of the physical power of dominance is both the very principle that defines this power and what threatens to overthrow the primacy of this art of ruling. While not the most ancient recorded formulation of the will to sanitise the essential relationship between man and *polemos*, it seems to me that Plato is the first thinker to introduce into the *bios politikos* the urgency of the seizure of this war in the public sphere as a condition of possibility of the good, which, as have seen, was to guide Aristotle in the discovery of a certain political calling in Western culture.

Now, with the arrival of the claim to authority of *dikē-sōphrōn-sōphrosynē* we have effectively crossed the threshold to the classical *bios politikos*. It is important to note, though, that this model of authority will not replace the old one, nor are they incompatible models. We are still in a system of rank where the former gradually seems to overlay the later in the formation of a certain *technē politikē*. By recourse to the form of the highest good, as the source and absolute measure of *dikē*, this *technē politikē* will work out the fundamental

question of the political, the matter of 'ruling and being ruled', that is, the question of who should govern: First, there is the claim of parents to rule over offspring. Second, there is the right of the noble to rule over the ignoble; and then, following on these as a third claim, the right of older people to rule and of younger to be ruled. The fourth right is that slaves ought to be ruled, and masters ought to rule. The fifth, the Athenian continues, is that the stronger should rule and the weaker be ruled. The latter is certainly what prevails in the animal kingdom, "being in accordance with nature as Pindar of Thebes once said", but this is not the most important of the rights to authority:

The most important right is, it would seem, the sixth, which ordains that the ignorant man should follow, and the wise man lead and rule. Nevertheless, my most sapient Pindar, this is a thing that I, for one, would hardly assert to be against nature, but rather according thereto – the natural rule of law, without force [ou biaion], over willing subjects. (Ibid. 689e-690c).

In the matter of ruling and being ruled the ignorant must follow the wise man submitting to his steering then. This is exactly what Plato has in mind in the passage of the *Laws* where the Athenian tries to convince Cleinias of 'putting the virtuous in command' seemingly as a means of warding off the problem of war and conquest in the public sphere. To put the virtuous in command corresponds, as we learned from the distinction between justice and injustice, to place in command the structure of the well-ordered soul and hence the kind of ruling that follows from observing the other cardinal virtues, courage, moderation, and wisdom. The virtuous man seeks out the life of wisdom [phronimon], and, in joining wisdom with the knowledge of ruling, brings justice to bear on his soul. This is how the licentious life of the unjust soul is often the result of ignorance of the ruling principle. In fact, "... no man can possibly be licentious voluntarily: it is owing to ignorance or incontinence, or both, that the great bulk of mankind live lives lacking in moderation." (Ibid. 734b). The lack of moderation is the result of ignorance, and so, in the absence of moderation, ignorance is joined with spiritedness, thus overturning many things by its 'inconsiderate force' [alogistō bia]. This is why *bia* is inferior to wisdom as a claim to authority, and why, consequently, the ignorant must follow and the wise man rule.

It has been argued that what Plato has in mind in the passage cited above, where he disputes Pindar in his fragment 169 on the *nomos basileus*, is to dismantle and neutralise the opposition that justified ‘the sovereign confusion’ of *bia* and *dikē*: “... what interests Plato is... the coincidence of violence and law constitutive of sovereignty. [In Plato] the power of law is defined as being in accordance with nature (*kata physin*) and essentially non-violent...” (Agamben 1998: 34). The claim we find in Agamben is that Plato exposes in Pindar what was allegedly seen as the “... scandalous unification of the two essentially antithetical principles that the Greeks called *Bia* and *Dikē*, violence and justice.” (Ibid. 31). But this is not true until Plato arrives at the proposition of wisdom as the superior mark of the right to rule or, more exactly, before the argument of Plato is taken out of its historical setting. What appears in Pindar is not ‘the scandalous unification of justice and violence’. Rather, it is the resemblance of *bia* and the ancient right to authority, which is the rule of custom [*nomos*] that happens in accordance with nature [*kata phusin*].

Accordingly, what occupies Plato is precisely this right to authority. In fact, the true concern in Plato, as he opposes *bia* to *dikē*, is to dismantle the bond of resemblance binding *bia* to *nomos*, the mark of superiority of the ruler in his divine lineage to ancient kings, and this, rather than neutralising ‘the sovereign confusion’ of violence and justice, is what is at stake in this passage of the *Laws*. The form of law Plato speaks of as ‘essentially non-violent’, pace Agamben, does not express a certain deliberative discourse on the atrocities of sovereign violence, but rather the attempt to subvert the right to authority of force by recourse to the power of law found in the resemblance *dikē-sōphrōn-sōphrosynē*. This is precisely the intention that guides the Athenian in his refutation of Pindar, and what comes to presence when he, in a word play, slightly alters the fragment from reading ‘justifying the most force’ to ‘doing force to the most just’. In his attempt to rescue the concept of the political from violence, Agamben walks straight into the trap setup by the tactical rhetoric of the Athenian.⁹⁹ This is particularly striking when he argues how, in book ten of the

⁹⁹ Suffice it to say, the *Laws* is a dialogue; it is a strategic mobilisation of discourse that seeks to make a certain claim valid. One should never try to interpret the Greeks in terms of the system of thought of the Classical Age in which identity and difference constitute the knowledge of things that situate them outside of dialectics and history.

Laws, Plato allegedly undertakes to eliminate the sovereign confusion born from the opposition of *phusis* and *nomos* and the thesis of the anteriority of nature to law: "Plato neutralizes both by affirming the originarity of the soul and of 'all that belongs to what is a soul' (intellect, *technē*, and *nomos*) with respect to bodies and the elements 'that we erroneously say are in accordance with nature'." (Ibid.).

We do not need to repeat here in what exactly this 'originarity of the soul' consists. It is strange, though, that Agamben does not seem to concern himself with this soul that makes possible the caesura between *phusis* and *nomos*, and which is actually the work of Plato rather than Pindar. This is all the more surprising since the discourse of Plato does actually not try to hide the fact that it is not the neutral standpoint of the 'natural law' without violence, but rather the attack of the justice of the mind on the right of authority found in nature. While the passage in the *Laws* might give rise to confusions on the actual intention that guides Plato's refutation of Pindar, it is not the only text in which the Platonic polemic against the poet appears. In the *Gorgias*, we find Plato citing Pindar's fragment 169, but here the argument is presented in the more sober manner where the adversary to some extent is allowed to defend himself. So we find Callicles in dialogue with Socrates stating that the kind of ruling of the soul, in which the soul must be brought to adhere to the resemblance of *dikē* and *nomos*, happens against nature. If this is justice [*dikē*], Callicles says, *phusis* and *nomos* are opposed to each other, since it forces man to become 'ashamed' and 'to contradict himself', and "... by nature everything is fouler that is more evil". (*Gorgias* 482e-483a). Such sense of justice is not given by nature, but by law [*hē te phusis kai ho nomos*], that is, the law one makes rather than the one given by nature. It cannot be given by nature because it opposes all the tonic passions of *thumos* and *epithumia* that augment action and the feeling of aliveness, by nature common to all living beings and to man the source of his divinity. In fact, when joined with law, this kind of justice will not only do harm to the man who unites them and makes them his own, but to all who become subject to this kind of ruling, which is against nature. In the counter-discourse of the *polemistēs*, the slave rises to show himself the master as the justice of the philosopher is revealed as a strategy of the weak for terrorising the stronger:

... I suppose the makers of the laws are the weaker sort of men, and the more numerous. So it is with a view to themselves and their own interest that they make their laws and distribute their praises and censures; and to terrorize the stronger sort of folk who are able to get an advantage, and to prevent them from getting one over them, they tell them, that such aggrandizement is foul and unjust, and that wrongdoing is just this endeavour to get the advantage of one's neighbours: for I expect they are well content to see themselves on an equality, when they are so inferior... For by what manner of right did Xerxes march against Greece, or his father against Scythia? Or take the countless other cases of the sort that one might mention. Why, surely these men follow nature – the nature of right – in acting thus; yes, on my soul, and follow the law of nature – though not that, I dare say, which is made by us; we mould the best and strongest amongst us, taking them from their infancy like young lions, and utterly enthrall them by our spells and witchcraft, telling them the while that they must have but their equal share, and that this is what is fair and just. But, I fancy, when some man arises with a nature of sufficient force, he shakes off all that we have taught him, bursts his bonds, and breaks free; he tramples underfoot our codes and juggleries, our charms and 'laws', which are all against nature; our slave rises in revolt and shows himself our master, and there dawns the full light of natural justice. And it seems to me that Pindar adds his evidence to what I say, in the ode where he says –

'Law the sovereign of all,
Mortals and immortals,'
which, so he continues, –
'Carries all with highest hand,
Doing violence to the most just:
in proof I take The deeds of Hercules, for unpurchased'. (Ibid. 483b-484b)

While this passage in the *Gorgias* shows the same slight alteration of Pindar's text, we can see the opposing claim to authority clearly delineated. As we find it in the counter-discourse of the *polemistēs*, it is obvious that the idea of the anteriority of *phusis* to law *nomos* does not express the suspension of law and the logic of the sovereign exception. On the contrary, it expresses the defence of the unity of law and nature, as it appears, not from above, but from below, that is, at the level of the individual struggling against the attack on the 'Apollonian' values by a certain justice of weakness. Moreover, if we approach this thinking of power and authority from the vantage point of the ruler and the

nomos basileus, we should note this form of power did not express an unlimited or absolute privilege. The form of power, which is articulated by the resemblance *bia-kratos-arētē*, essentially concerns the relation between master and slave. It does not so much concern the relation of the ruler to a multitude of struggling forces that make up the social body. The *nomos basileus* appeared in the relatively limited sphere where, if the subject dared to rise up and contest his authority or transgress his law, the ruler could punish him, ultimately, by taking his life. The concern about the multitude and the war of every man against every man remains absent, because we have never left the one-to-one relationship of master and slave. We are in a condition where the relations of forces find their expression in war, as relationships of domination governed by the resemblance *bia-kratos-arētē*. The idea of a public sphere constituted in a war that must be suspended therefore remains alien to this form of authority, since authority, rather than being what emerges from the global suspension of this war, is precisely what is determined in the actual practices of the war, with its trials of strength, its disguises, its strategies of deception, its plots and its ploys.

It is in other words inaccurate when Agamben claims that Pindar's *nomos basileus* and "the Sophistic polemic against *nomos* in favour of nature... can be considered the necessary premise of the opposition between the state of nature and the 'commonwealth', which Hobbes posits as the ground of his conception of sovereignty." (Agamben 1998: 35). In fact, we should rather look to Plato and the form of the good for cues to the origin of the distinction between the commonwealth and the state of nature. It will be from the tenets of the kind of authority, which believes authority to be vested in the originarity of the soul, and all that belongs to this soul (mind, *technē*, and *nomos*), that we will see the law that goes beyond and crosses the limits the natural law; the promotion of the good, the wise, and the just as the law without limits, the sovereign law, the sovereign law which contains the virtuality of the law of nature as the war of every man against every man. By this I certainly do not mean that Platonic discourse is identical to the modern discourse on sovereignty, but rather than the essential dislocation of *nomos* from *phusis*, on which the principle of sovereignty rests, is delineated in Plato – not only in the Athenian's polemic

against *phusis* in favour of wisdom, as the superior mark of the right to rule, but also when Plato speaks of the urgency of putting the virtuous in command to ward off the perpetual war that traverses the public sphere. This suspension of *phusis* is the logic that governs the ‘natural law’ according to which the ignorant must follow the wise man. The true meaning of the natural law as being ‘without force’ [ou biaion] consists in the *telos* that suspends *phusis* by recourse to the principle of the soul,¹⁰⁰ and this, rather than the Sophistic conviction of the anteriority of *phusis*, is the logic that seems to have opened up the terrain for Hobbes’ invention of the great Leviathan.

In fact, the worldly God-sovereign that political-philosophy was to discover with Hobbes never seems far away in Plato. In Plato, the ruling by the just and the virtuous often seems to become a matter of the command of one man, the one most superior in virtue and wisdom who brings his well-ordered soul to bear on the relations of forces, straightening out the souls of men by means of law. It is the introduction into the calculations of power of the theme of the philosopher king, a figure that seems not so different from the shepherd who in time would emerge with pastoral power. Indeed, as we learn in the *Republic*, the actions of men must be guided by this figure in whom the superiority of ‘philosophic intelligence’ calls upon him to exercise ‘the natural rule of law, without force, over willing subjects’. As Socrates explains to Callicles in the *Gorgias*, this is the only way man can achieve happiness; to submit to the philosopher’s sense of justice and follow his ruling. In fact, there will be no escape from trouble for the human race [anthrōpinō genei] before man submits and follows the philosopher having become king:

But say it [eirēsetai] I will,¹⁰¹ even if, to keep the figure, it is likely to wash us away on billows of laughter and scorn... Unless, said I, either philosophers become kings in our city-states or those whom we now call our kings and rulers take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously and adequately, and there is a

¹⁰⁰ We can see the same logic at work in another passage of the *Laws*. Having posited the notion of the superiority of wisdom to all the claims to authority, the Athenian argues for the legislator to put to rights the order of these claims, which, as ‘they are essentially opposed to one another’, is ‘a source of civil strife’. The failure to do so, says the Athenian, brought ruin to the kings of Argos and Messene and to the Hellenic power, ‘splendid as it was at that epoch’ (*Laws* 690d-e).

¹⁰¹ In the orators, in particular, *eirēsetai* often introduces a bold statement.

conjunction of these two things, political power and philosophic intelligence, while the motley horde of the natures who at present pursue either apart from the other are compulsorily excluded, there can be no cessation of troubles, dear Glaucon, for our city-states, nor, I fancy, for the human race either. (Republic 473c-d).

As we can see from Plato's bold interrogative statement, the philosopher king is obviously closer to a fiction of the speculative mind than the reality of the practice of ruling. However, we should not dismiss this idea as unimportant or too naive to merit serious attention. While it is clear that this idea of ruling men seems to have a marginal influence in classical Greece, we will see the theme of the philosopher king appear again in the figure of the Roman emperor. Most importantly, what we find in Plato is the delineation of a certain model for the government of men as a flock that must answer to the command of principles that can only be resolved by recourse to the good. It is the model where man must rely on the wisdom and virtue of the shepherd to guide him towards his salvation and happiness, which occurs at the intersection of philosophical knowledge and political power [dunamis te politikē kai philosophia].

It is clear, however, that the function of the philosopher king is not so much to guide and lead the souls of men on the path to salvation, as it is to make men derive the possibility of their happiness from the rule of law. The wisdom and justice of the philosopher king or good magistrate are in other words, first and foremost, the sources of his function as *nomeus*, that is, as the shepherd of law, as lawgiver. Here, we are actually closer to the old *nomos basileus* than the model of pastoral power, the difference being that *bia* and *kratos*, as the simple one-to-one force relations between master and slave, ruler and subject, have been suspended as sources of authority in favour of *dikē*, which is to be resolved at the intersection of political power and philosophical knowledge. Moreover, whereas the *nomos basileus* essentially concerns the very limited relation of master and slave, ruler and subject, the form of *nomos* we find in the idea of the philosopher king as *nomeus* concerns a few great common laws that trace the boundaries of a very wide sphere, inside of which *technē* determines the right course of action. This is quite obvious in Plato, as the question of transgression always seems to be considered on the basis of a few general principles, namely,

the question of virtue and its absence. *Agnoia* [ignorance], for example, must be punished being a source of the transgression of justice. It is the 'third cause' of injustice next to appetite and spiritedness, and should receive the proper penalty according to the nature of its alliance with *bia*.¹⁰² So, while political authority is certainly determined by recourse to the soul, it seems the happiness and salvation of the flock does not so much concern the guiding of the inner life of souls. Happiness is rather derived indirectly from the mundane law that considers acts and transgressions in their concrete realisation, the law which refers to the sword rather than to heaven and hell:

... whenever any man commits any unjust act, great or small, the law shall instruct him and absolutely compel him for the future either never willingly to dare to do such a deed, or else to do it ever so much less often, in addition to paying for the injury. To effect this, whether by action or speech, by means of pleasures and pains, honours and dishonours, money-fines and money-gifts, and in general by whatsoever means one can employ to make men hate injustice and love (or at any rate not hate) justice, – this is precisely the task of laws most noble. But for all those whom he perceives to be incurable in respect of these matters, what penalty shall the lawgiver enact, and what law? The lawgiver will realise that in all such cases not only is it better for the sinners themselves to live no longer, but also that they will prove of a double benefit to others by quitting life – since they will both serve as a warning to the rest not to act unjustly, and also rid the city-state of wicked men, – and thus he will of necessity inflict death as the chastisement for their sins... (Laws 862d-863a).

5.3. As we can see, then, the *nomeus* looks after the welfare of the *polis* rather than the souls of men. His function as lawgiver is to rid the *polis* of the wrongdoings of wicked men. We are in other words far from a situation where the shepherd appears before his flock to declare the singular truth of an *arkhē* scripture, illuminate the souls of men, and care for their wellbeing. Still, it is important to recognise the displacement that occurs in the role of the ruler who is now called upon to suspend the condition of *phusis*, in which the relations of

¹⁰² As Plato says in the *Laws*: "... counting ignorance in its simple form to be the cause of minor sins, and in its double form – where the folly is due to the man being gripped not by ignorance only, but also by a conceit of wisdom, as though he had full knowledge of things he knows nothing at all about, – counting this to be the cause of great and brutal sins when it is joined with strength and might, but the cause of childish and senile sins when it is joined with weakness..." (Laws 863c-d).

forces find their expression in war and where authority issues from the resemblance *bia-kratos-arētē*. It is important to notice this shift in the art of ruling that appears with Plato's good magistrate who brings the recurrent intervention of political power to bear on the relations of forces for the good of the *polis*; the good magistrate who, by virtue of his authority being vested in the resemblance *dikē-sōphrōn-sōphrosynē*, must see to it that the *polis* arrives at a certain form which is both the cause of the good and its end. This concerns a certain *technē politikē*, an art of ruling defined by a specific knowledge, which is exercised over the flock of men. This is actually where we find the theme of the shepherd and the flock in Greek literature to designate the relationship of the good magistrate with his subjects or fellow citizens.

As Foucault explains in his lecture series at Collège de France, *Security, Territory, Population*, this idea of politics as shepherding is, however, a marginal and limited theme in Greek literature. The theme of the shepherd first seems to occur in Homer with reference to Agamemnon, but here the predication of shepherd appears in the strictly ritual form of a name given to the ruler as the 'shepherd of peoples', a title conferred upon the sovereign in all Indo-European literature. We also find the theme of the shepherd in the Pythagorean tradition in relation to Zeus who is known by the epithet *Nomios*. In the etymology of the Pythagoreans, *nomos* is derived from *nomeus*, meaning the shepherd. In the Pythagoreans, then, "[the] shepherd is the lawmaker insofar as he distributes food, directs the flock, indicates the right direction, and says how the sheep must mate so as to have good offspring. All this is the function of the shepherd who gives the law to his flock. Hence the title of Zeus as *Nomios*. Zeus is the god-shepherd who provides his sheep with the food they need." (Foucault 2007: 137). This clearly coincides with the theme of the pastor as we find it in the Christian tradition. However, the Pythagorean tradition is rather marginal, and it seems the god-shepherd is a figure who appears at the beginning of times, but then departs to leave men to their own affairs. The theme of the magistrate as the shepherd, Foucault argues, is limited with one important exception, which is Plato. In the *Republic*, *Critias*, the *Laws*, and the *Statesman*, we find a series of reflections on the magistrate as the shepherd. On different grounds, however,

Foucault seems to attach little importance to these entries of the pastoral theme in the classical political vocabulary of Greece.

In Plato, Foucault says, the theme of the shepherd occurs in three contexts. First, it occurs in the context of the gods who, as the pastors of humanity, nurtured men, guided them, provided them with food, and gave them their general principles of conduct. This context seems to correspond to the Pythagorean theme of Zeus as *Nomios*. In the second type of texts where we learn of the magistrate as a shepherd, he appears as a subordinate magistrate, Foucault argues. He is one who performs a duty and is something between a 'watchdog' and a 'policeman' who 'must keep the wild beast away from his flock'. This kind of magistrate, Foucault explains, is not seen at the pinnacle of the ruling of the *polis*, but is rather a 'functionary-shepherd' whose function does not consist in the primary form of the political art of government (Ibid. 139). Foucault then proceeds to the third series of texts from Plato to discuss a dialogue from the *Republic* between Socrates and Thrasymachus. In this passage, we find Thrasymachus opposing the idea of the magistrate as a shepherd stating that Socrates is naïve to see the ruler of the *polis* as someone who cares for the wellbeing of the flock. The rulers do not look after the good of men like "... the shepherds and the neat-herds are considering the good of the sheep and the cattle and fatten and tend them." If they do, Thrasymachus says, it is 'for their own profit' (*Republic* 343b-c). Socrates then counters Thrasymachus arguing that he is in fact not describing the good shepherd, which is precisely one who devotes his ruling to the wellbeing of the flock and not to his own end.

Commenting on this passage, Foucault seems to dismiss this occurrence as merely a reference to the Pythagorean theme rather than the true conviction of Plato. While the conviction of Thrasymachus, who clearly derives his idea of the magistrate from the claim to political authority of *bia-kratos-arētē*, seems to bare witness to the fact that the idea of politics as shepherding was not a popular model for the Greeks, the appearance in Plato of the magistrate-shepherd does not simply express a reference to the Pythagorean theme of the god-shepherds who once appeared at the beginning of time. In fact, the theme of the magistrate-shepherd rather seems to coincide with the present reality in which we find Plato's formulation of the idea of political power as an art of

ruling exercised by the philosopher king over the flock of men. It is precisely this theme that occurs in the suspension of the old model of authority of the warrior aristocracy. As we have seen, the dialogues between Thrasymachus, Polemarchus, and Socrates are in fact the expression of this struggle for the right to political authority. We are therefore not in a condition where the god-shepherd appears to provide men with their general principles of conduct in order to leave men to their own doings, but rather at the site where the magistrate-shepherd appears to exercise political authority, as a certain strategic intervention in the relations of forces.

By this I do not mean to say that the pastoral model, at least as it would be worked out in Christian thought from Pharaonic Egyptian, Assyrian, and Hebrew literature, is present in Classical Greece, but rather that there seems to be certain resemblances at work, which places the Greeks closer to their Indo-European neighbours than Foucault perhaps is willing to admit. While Foucault is justified in his analysis of the rarity of the theme of the magistrate-shepherd in Greek literature, it seems the occurrences in Plato of this theme cannot be understood as completely isolated and without reference to an already existing set of practices that to some extent would support it. I am referring here, in particular, to the schema of the *stratia* and the *militia*, which actually takes its model from the fold. It seems to me that Foucault might have overlooked the resemblances or perhaps brushed them aside on the basis of the lack of coincidence of appearance and the knowledges and practices that supported this logic of governing men. This is particularly striking when Foucault, on the basis that the *Index isokrateon* shows no entries of the words *piomēn* and *nomeus*, draws the conclusion that the figure of the shepherd does not exist in Isocrates:

[It] seems that the expression shepherd or herdsman cannot be found in Isocrates... it is surprising to note that Isocrates gives a very precise, prescriptive, and dense description of the good magistrate who, above all, must watch over the good education of the youth. A whole series of duties and tasks are incumbent on the magistrate. He must look after the young people and constantly supervise them, he must watch over not only their education but also their food, how they

behave, how they develop, and even how they marry. We are close here to the metaphor of the shepherd, but it does not arise. (Foucault 2007: 138).

While Isocrates might not employ the words *piomēn* and *nomeus*, it is clear that what is at stake here is precisely the shepherd-flock relationship we have seen in Xenophon's account of the education of Spartan boys in the *Spartan Constitution*. There is in other words good reason to suspect that Isocrates did not have to make use of a metaphor to speak of what is literally the expression of the relationship of the shepherd of education [paidonomos] and the herd [boua]. This is to say that to understand the formation of the art of ruling we find in Plato, and how it related to the world of classical Greece, both in its limitation and its possible articulation points, we must pay closer attention to the structural diversity around which the chain of resemblances is articulated. In particular, we must pay attention to the unexpected morphologies that turn up to guide action at the site of the *bios politikos* at the intersection of the techniques of the military model of war and the shepherd-flock relationship. Turning the attention to this structural diversity, one finds that the Pythagorean theme of Zeus as *Nomios* actually also occurs in Aristotle's account of the *arkhē*. Foucault never mentions Aristotle, perhaps because the theme of the shepherd never surfaces in Aristotle when he speaks of the magistrate or the politician. But this should not be taken as evidence of the model of the shepherd-flock being absent in Aristotle. We should not forget that the *politikon zōon* is born from the resemblances of the *arkhē*, the ruling principle that governs all animate nature from the vantage point of the origin and commandment which is God. It is not so surprising then that the reference that guides Aristotle in his account of the *arkhē* is in fact the god-shepherd. More precisely, Aristotle refers to Hesiod's account in *Works and Days* in which we find one of the first representations of the theme of Zeus as *Nomios*, the Father of Gods and men who provides men with a sense of justice [dikē] in the form of the gift of *nomos*. We should note that Aristotle's account of the *arkhē*, while certainly a reflection on the beginning of things, concerns the present reality of the mind and its counterpart, God. The god-shepherd survives in *Theos* and the justice of the well-ordered soul, which, as Aristotle says in the *Politics*, is an element of the *polis* for the

regulation of the political community (Politics 1253a: 37-39). So, while the theme of the magistrate-shepherd does not seem to appear in Aristotle, we should not lose sight of the kinship between Aristotle's *Theos* and Hesiod's Zeus, as a positive source of justice and the good. In fact, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, not only does the god-shepherd survive in the virtue of justice, he is also present in the Greek idea of freedom [eleutheria]. With Aristotle, Zeus commands again, not simply from the past, but in the present, and not only as *Nomios*, but also as *Eleutherios*, the shepherd of deliverance who provides for the salvation of the flock through conquest and victory. The god-shepherd is ever-present in the mind of the free man to guide action, as conquest, freedom, and justice become part of the same political dream in which action must always be disclosed in the form of the good. But how is it then that we do not see Aristotle's political man or Plato's philosopher king turning up to show himself as the Son of God, the emissary who transmits the commandments of the *arkhē* scripture and orders his flock of men? In other words, how is it that the birth of political man from the metaphysics of the mind, the emergence of political power with the denouncement and suspension of *bia-kratos-arētē* in favour of *dikē-sōphrōn-sōphrosynē*, and the introduction into the relations of forces of the *telos* of the good as the end of political community never materialise as a unitary power wielded by the one shepherd over his flock? In short, why do we see the birth of a *technē politikē*, which no doubt still marks a bloody period in history, but not the naked politics of the good and its counterpart, the law without limits?

Here, we can return to Foucault's commentary on Plato. According to Foucault, there is one text in Plato that explains the problem of thinking political power in the *polis* in terms of the model of the one shepherd commanding his flock. This is the *Statesman*. Here, we find a dialogue on the nature of the political art of governing men seen from the vantage point of the practice of politics as 'the art of tending a herd of living beings' (261e-262a). In essence, the problem that arises in the text is how to locate the magistrate-shepherd and his flock as a unitary assemblage at the site of political order. First and foremost, this involves the question of what a magistrate is. A magistrate is known by the knowledge that defines his art of ruling, we learn in Socrates. As we have seen,

the art of ruling consists in the knowledge of commanding and steering. But the conjunction of the knowledge and practice of giving command, to which the Greeks applied the term *technē*, cannot be singled out in terms of a unitary practice of the care of the flock. There is not one *technē* that tends to the flock, but rather a whole series of arts of commanding and ruling, which pertains to such diverse practices as farming, horsemanship, oxherding, huntsmanship, chariot-driving, the piloting a ship, medicine, calculation, geometry, lyre-playing, flute-playing, painting, sculpture, housebuilding, shipbuilding, weaving, pottery, smithing, cookery, and so on. But what if one draws the distinction, Plato asks in a passage of the text, that the magistrate is not to be found on the side of the craftsman who imposes orders on inanimate things? The magistrate is not the shepherd of things, but of animals, that is, the particular species man. However, within this division of the animal species, in which we find the herd of men to be shepherded, it seems a series of subdivisions exist. The herd never seems to appear at the site of any clear distinction. There is a flock to be shepherded, but one with no essential nature or, at least, one that cannot be known:

[One] should make the division as most people in this country do; they separate the Hellenic race from all the rest as one, and to all the other races, which are countless in number and have no relation in blood or language to one another, they give the single name 'barbarian'; then, because of this single name, they think it is a single species. Or it was as if a man should think he was dividing number into two classes by cutting off a myriad from all the other numbers, with the notion that he was making one separate class, and then should give one name to all the rest, and because of that name should think that this also formed one class distinct from the other. A better division, more truly classified and more equal, would be made by dividing number into odd and even, and the human race into male and female; as for the Lydians and Phrygians and various others they could be opposed to the rest and split off from them when it was impossible to find and separate two parts... (262d-e).

As we can see, the herd of men to be shepherded appears to get lost in its own divisions and subdivisions, which seems to suggest that it leads nowhere to think the essence of politics as a matter of the one shepherd and his flock. As Foucault says, 'the magistrate is a shepherd, but the shepherd of who?' (Foucault 2007: 142). In this sense, the one shepherd and his flock remain

absent in Plato, because the knowledge of the flock gets lost in the order of things, which still appears as the conjunction of opposites, as *polemos*. However, the problem that faces the one shepherd is not simply that of the fleeting divisions that constitute knowledge. There is also the purely practical problem that the one shepherd must take care of a whole series of different things. He must watch over the young and make sure that they receive the right *paideia*, he must assure that the walls of the *polis* remain intact, he must provide his flock with food, he must care for them when they are sick, and, most importantly, he must lead them into battle to deliver their freedom.

It is clear, then, that the one shepherd and his flock cannot function as a political model at this point in time. However, it seems to me that we may well miss the essential elements the Greek art of ruling has bequeathed to the Western political ethos if we insist on looking for the model of the shepherd and the flock in the clearly discernable form of a unitary assemblage. What we must pay attention to is rather the development in the field of knowledge concerning this art of ruling in relation to the long and broad development of *technē*. With the appearance of classical politico-philosophical discourse, we have seen how thought finds a renewed interest in the nature of truth [*alētheia*] and knowledge [*sophia*]. With the obvious exception of Aristotle, this concern about truth and knowledge is not expressed as an interest in the primary knowledge of immutable laws that govern the *kosmos*. Politico-philosophical discourse in fact emerges out of a dislocation that abandons the inquiry into *phusis* and the old knowledge of *polemos* in which action, as subject to the monotonous eternal laws of *kosmos*, remains confined to the monarchy of nature. As we have seen in Aristotle's reflection on the *arkhē* of *kosmos*, classical thought in fact seeks to break with what the philosopher refers to as the disorganised knowledges of the ancients. That is, in the Pre-Socratics, things are ever in a state of flux and flow wherefore no knowledge is possible of their essential nature. As we have seen, this seems to have been particularly disturbing to Aristotle, since no cause could be deciphered from this kind of knowledge of how existing things have come to acquire form to be arranged well and beautifully. This is also to say that the classical concern about knowledge seems to have been articulated around a particularly strong interest in form, that is, the knowledge that has to do with

the cultivation of a domain in the sense of bringing forth beings and things by recourse to the structure of *eidōs*. To this end, the *Logos*, understood as the mere conjunction of opposites, is inadequate since here we find no account of the origin of things, their nature, or end [*eidōs*] to enable the proper functioning of a *technē*. The first steps toward a knowledge that would enable itself to determine the essence of the thing and its true form would come from the tradition issuing from Socrates. As we have seen in Aristotle's commentary on Socratic thought in the *Metaphysics* (987b 1-4), Socrates was the first to 'disregard the physical universe' to focus on the predication of *logos* that in time would enable the disclosure of the nature of things. It is important to note, however, that the old knowledge of *polemos* to some extent still persists in Socrates and in Plato. We can see it in the nature ascribed to the relationship between the predication of sensible things by *logos* and the *eidōs* in which the mind grasps things. This relationship between the thing itself and the form in which the thing is seen is referred to the arbitrary relationship of language and the world. *Phusis* is autonomous to the realm of *eidōs*, because the physical world remains in a permanent state of change, we find Plato arguing. Moreover, *eidōs* always appears in the form of a 'dyad of the great and the small', that is, as simple divisions. This is precisely the 'problem' that Plato's shepherd faces in the passage cited above from the *Statesman*. And this is also how Plato's suspension of the war of every man against every man, as articulated around the division of wisdom and virtue from force and physical power, simply produces the horde with its mutable potentialities rather than the homogeneous flock of peaceful sheep. There is no point of origin and commandment where *phusis* and *eidōs* can be reconciled, no God in whose intimate presence the essence of things could be given birth to from the dazzling hands of their creator. What we see in Plato's multiple divisions that cannot be harnessed is in other words simply the expression of the nascent mind at work, as the simple withdrawal and projection onto the world of the clearing that make things visible [*eidomai*] as a series of divisions disclosed by *polemos*.

In Aristotle, this is no longer quite the case though. We should recall the passage in the *Metaphysics* where Aristotle denounces the Platonic idea of *eidōs* on the basis of Plato being unable to explain the cause of the *eidōs* of the good. In

Aristotle, *phusis* is joined with *eidos* to constitute the essence of a thing [to ti en einai]; the *ousia* [essence] of a thing is caused by *eidos*, which is derived from God who is both the *eidos* of the good and its cause (988a 7-14). Now, does this mean that the problem posed by the arrangement of truth and knowledge to the *technē* of ruling of the one magistrate-shepherd is thereby solved? Obviously not, because one would thereby overlook that *technē* still has to answer to *phusis* even if it has become possible to speak of things in *theōria* as having an *ousia*. In other words, so long as *ousia* must answer to *phusis* and *theōria* is distinguished from *technē* and practical wisdom [phronēsis], which is the case in the classical world, the one magistrate-shepherd and his flock will not appear. In fact, for a long time *technē* actually has no relation to the disclosure of things in terms of *ousia*. The meaning of *technē* seems to remain close to the etymological root of the word *tektōn*, meaning master craftsman, in particular, as applied to woodwork and carpentry. Up until a certain point, *technē* simply expresses a relation of *praxis* that occurs between *phusis* and *poiēsis* [creation]. The craftsman responds to the grain of the wood, which is also to say that *technē* remains rather rudimentary. When we find the notion of *technē* in classical discourse, it seems to have established a different relation to *phusis* and its semantic field is vastly expanded encompassing several practices, from horsemanship and oxherding to chariot-driving and the piloting of a ship, and so on. The relationship of *phusis* to *technē* is now defined by *eidos* rather than mere *poiēsis*. As Plato explains in the *Gorgias* (503d-e), all craftsmen work, not at random, but look toward the end of their craft so that what they produce will have the proper *eidos*. Now, do we see a similar development in the *technē* that cares, neither for inanimate things, nor the wild beasts or the domesticated animals, but for the particular animal species man? Well, there is certainly the development in the practice of *paideia*, in which we find the herd of boys whose souls and bodies must to be shaped by recourse to the *eidos* of the model of *militia* and the *stratia*. As explained in these pages, one cannot overestimate the importance of these disciplinary practices that discover the mind and the body as a kind of living machinery, which belongs to the mechanics of an assemblage of forces, an assemblage whose form is never complete without the *stratēgos*, the *arkhōn* or for that matter the *paidonomos*. However, even the Spartans had

to rely on some form of a slave economy to provide for the subsistence of life, which is also to say that the *eidos* and *epistēmē* of this model of ruling could not really be applied to all political matters. Most importantly, even if the military model permeates the *bios politikos* by its presence in the mind, this *epistēmē* and *eidos* that define both the art of war and the education of boys never materialise as a *technē politikē* of the magistrate-shepherd that encompasses and is defined by the knowledges and practices of the *oikonomos* who cares for his household, the *despotēs* who cares for his family, the farmer who cares for the domesticated animals, the physical trainer who looks after the bodies of men, or the craftsman who maintains the city walls. As we learn at the beginning of the *Politics*, the *technē politikē* is not defined by the knowledges and practices of ruling of the *oikonomos*, the *despotēs*, or those of the *tektōn* (1252a 26-35).

In other words, we never find a grand *theōria* according to which all beings and things that dwell in the *polis* must be shepherded by recourse to an *arkhē* scripture, to *Theos*. In fact, for some time, classical thought will not even distinguish between *technē* and *epistēmē*. In Plato, there is no systematic account of either or of how they relate. In some dialogues, *technē* and *epistēmē* actually seem interchangeable. In the *Charmides* (165c), Socrates explains that medicine, as the craft of the physician [*iatrikē technē*], is the *epistēmē* of health. In *Euthydemus*, where Socrates discusses the *technē* of carpentry, we learn that what guides the right use of materials in carpentry is the knowledge of carpentry [*techtonikē epistēmē*] (281a). And in *Ion* (532c), Socrates rebukes the rhapsode Ion for his account of Homer telling him that he is unable to talk about Homer with *technē* and *epistēmē*. Finally, in Socrates' many deliberations on the theme of the care of oneself, we find the delineation of an *epistēmē* concerning the cultivation of the self; a *technē tou biou*. One will notice then that *technē* no longer simply concerns the exteriority of concrete practices, the commanding of things and beings, but also the interiority of the soul who is now put in command of its desires and its passions. The relation between *phusis* and *technē* can now define the shepherd-flock relationship in which men are prescribed the proper form of justice of the well-ordered soul. Yet, as we have seen, what emerges out of this sense of justice is not really the herd, but rather the horde wherefore the form of the good always seems to be in the danger of

disappearing at the site of the vast dispersion of ‘appetites and pleasures and pains’. In fact, the unity of this form of the good always seems to be broken down by the activities of this multitude of practitioners of *technē* that assure things and beings find their proper form or, in the event that they have suffered damage or become sick, help restore them to their proper form. This could be the physician who knows how to care for the sick and prescribe the proper regimen, but also the carpenter who seeks to reconstruct a broken weaver's shuttle. The carpenter who seeks to reconstruct the shuttle looks to the *eidos* of shuttle, to that which is shuttle [ho estin kerkis] (Cratylus 389a-b). Accordingly, the *epistēmē* of *eidos* enables the physician and the physical trainer to seek the welfare of the body, just as it makes possible for the judge and the legislator to seek the welfare of the soul (Republic 464c). So, when we finally get to pinnacle of the *polis*, it seems little is left to the care of the politician and the magistrate for the wellbeing of men. What are the *eidos* and the *epistēmē* that define the art of politics then? The art of ruling men in the *polis*, Socrates explains in the *Republic*, is a kind of *technē* that looks after the welfare of the *polis*. The *epistēmē* that enables the magistrate to look after the wellbeing of men is the one that allows for him to dispose well over things for the good of the city; the *epistēmē* of ruling takes counsel for the *polis* as a whole with a view to the betterment of its relations with itself and other *poleis*, Socrates elaborates (Republic 342e; 428b-d). At the hands of the magistrate, the wellbeing of men is in other words seen as a matter of providing for the *eidos* of the good which is the ship of *polis*. In other dialogues, it appears that the *arkhōn* who claims the just right to authority has the proper *epistēmē* of *technē* allowing him to achieve what is good for the *polis*: “It is the science of guardianship or government and it is to be found in those rulers to whom we just now gave the name of guardians in the full sense of the word.” (428d). Yet, to these rulers this *technē politikē* does not really seem to constitute a clearly discernable essence with its own singular practices and its own particular end. The art of government is in other words articulated around a fairly powerless essence-knowledge relation, where the multiple resemblances of *technē* keep turning up at the site of political order. This is expressed nowhere better than when Socrates, in a passage of the *Republic*, likens the *technē* of ruling the *polis* to that of the painter who looks to a

model. Both shape things according to their proper *eidos*, Socrates explains, and both look to the form of the beautiful [kalos] in order to achieve what is good [agathos] (484c). The coupling of the *epistēmē* of *technē* with the deeper knowledge of the *eidos* of the beautiful and the good form the art of politics exercised as the conjunction of philosophical knowledge and political power.

Turning the attention to Aristotle, we basically find the same account of the art of ruling with the exception that the *epistēmē* that defines the art of ruling the political community is now more clearly distinguished from the broad sense of *technē*. This is because *eidos*, as derived from the plane of God, now determines the substance or essence [ousia] of the thing. In Plato, *eidos* is limited to the function of establishing divisions that cannot really determine the propinquity of things or impose limits on them, since *eidos* remains confined to the simple activity of mind that projects the clearing onto the world. In Aristotle, *eidos*, and hence the *epistēmē* that defines the *technē politikē*, is no longer confined to the crude divisions of small and great, night and day, famine and plenty, male and female, barbarian and Greek, which show up at the site of the clearing, as *eidos*, but only to be carried off in the perpetual motion of *phusis* and disappear into the infinite resemblances of *polemos*. In Aristotle, the mode of thinking *phusis* is to some extent still one of becoming, but in the sense that potentiality must pass over into actuality, as articulated from that middle region where the *logos* of mind corresponds to the essence [ousia] of the thing so as to guide action [agein] and *technē*. That is, in Aristotle, the relationship between *eidos* and *technē* is articulated around a stronger essence-knowledge relation than in Plato. We are closer to a condition where the art of government, rather than simply being absorbed in the perpetual movement of *phusis*, can acquire permanence or form [*eidos*] precisely from the restraining hold of *eidos* and the mind by which the thing to some extent can be ‘put’, ‘placed’, or ‘arranged’ in order with its *ousia* and in accordance with the good. Naturally, this presents us with the pertinent question: is the *eidos* of political community, to which the *technē politikē* strives, now singled out as an essence of the form of the good derived from *theōria*, the pure activity of mind devoid of any foundation in *phusis*? Clearly, such an assertion would neither be true to the discourse of Aristotle nor to the historical reality of classical Greece. *Technē politikē* retains

foundation in *phusis* because the *epistēmē* that defines the end of the art of politics cannot come into being without practical wisdom [*phronēsis*]. *Phronēsis* is derived from experience of being, which is to say that politics is not the effect of the pure actuality of the mind. Whereas the mind apprehends things that cannot be proven by *logos*, *phronēsis* deals with the ultimate particular thing that cannot be apprehended by the mind as *epistēmē*, but only by sense perception and *logos* bringing the potentiality of action before the mind. This is also why, as Aristotle explains in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, neither philosophy nor politics can really be practiced in youth since they require not only mind, but also the experience garnered by *phronēsis*.¹⁰³ As we can see, at the level of actual practices, the predication of *theōria* and *epistēmē*, in the sense of arresting things and disclosing their essence from a unitary point that ascribes to them their true *technē* of ruling, is not really possible. In fact, in the passages of the *Politics* where Aristotle seems to approach the essence of *epistēmē politikē*, we actually encounter the same however scarcely less rudimentary divisions we saw in Plato. Even for one ‘who studies the subject philosophically’, rather than simply practically, this science of politics in other words always seems to get lost in the multiple divisions and subdivisions that seem to exist within the knowledge that is supposed to define it, such as the taxonomy of constitutions:

But it is necessary to say at a little greater length what each of these constitutions is; for the question involves certain difficulties, and it is the special mark of one who studies any subject philosophically, and not solely with regard to its practical aspect, that he does not overlook or omit any point, but brings to light the truth about each. Now tyranny, as has been said, is monarchy exerting despotic power over the political community; oligarchy is when the control of the government is in the hands of those that own the properties; democracy is when on the contrary it is in the hands of those that do not possess much property, but are poor. A first difficulty is with regard to the definition. If the majority of the citizens were wealthy and were in control of the state, yet when the multitude is in power it is a democracy, and similarly, to take the other case, if it were to occur

¹⁰³ As Aristotle explains: “[Although] the young may be experts in geometry and mathematics and similar branches of knowledge, we do not consider that a young man can have Prudence [*phronēsis*]. The reason is that Prudence includes a knowledge of particular facts, and this is derived from experience, which a young man does not possess; for experience is the fruit of years... the first principles of Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy are derived from experience: the young can only repeat them.” (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1142a 5-10).

somewhere that the poor were fewer than the rich but were stronger than they and accordingly were in control of the government, yet where a small number is in control it is said to be an oligarchy, then it would seem that our definition of the forms of constitution was not a good one. And once again, if one assumed the combination of small numbers with wealth and of multitude with poverty, and named the constitutions thus – one in which the rich being few in number hold the offices, oligarchy: one in which the poor being many in number hold the offices, democracy, – this involves another difficulty. (Politics 1279b 8-30).

5.4. It is clear then that the essence-knowledge relation we find in the art of politics, while certainly more strongly articulated in Aristotle than in Plato, cannot really define and take hold of its object. So, while Aristotle's *Theos* certainly commands in the *technē politikē* of the city of men, being ever-present in the mind, it is equally clear that in the day-to-day ruling of the *stratēgos*, the *oikonomos*, and the *despotēs*, the free man over the slave, the philosopher over the ignorant, the divine glow of the god-shepherd seems to appear in a distant horizon. The divine 'unmoved mover' takes his place as the 'master craftsman' of *kosmos* who dwells among the old *Nomios* and *Eleutherios* whose gifts of justice and freedom, along with those of the stars, once engendered man by flesh and blood as a certain animal species with the capacity for political existence.

However, and whether it is just the strange course of history or that of tragedy shall remain unsaid, but during the centuries that follow the Classical Greek period we will see a development where the *arkhē* scripture that once traced a wide circle in the distance, inside of which *technē politikē* determined the art of ruling, will become the essence of ruling. It is clear that the Christian model must be considered in its own right here, and not be conflated with the military model of war that is the invention of the Greeks. However, one cannot fail to see how, during the first centuries AD, the two models, although seemingly distinct by means and end, intersect at several places and refer back to one another. In fact, we find a strong kinship between the two models where one always seems liable to pass over into the other. With the arrival of Christian thought, the self will retreat further into the depths of the mind and, in the intimacy of self-presence, discover the evermore urgent commandments of *Theos*. The practice of an *askēsis* and its correlatives, discipline, moderation, and

self-control, will be taken into the cells of the monastery where *theōria* will illuminate the soul in the darkness of its profound solitude. The struggle against desire, renunciation, self-accusation, and confession will constitute the strange rituals of a practice of the soul whose counterpart is the ruling force of the Son of God, the shepherd of being who commands and leads his army of souls to salvation and eternal bliss. But it is the same dream of salvation and freedom, now nourished from the springs frequented by the first shepherds, that is lived in the battlefield where freedom will only be had from perpetual conquest as the *stratia* and the *militia* march on in the *legio*. Now, these two lines of flight, in which we find the same mind struggling to straighten out the strife of the soul, will begin to intersect and converge. At this point of intersection, we find a figure such as Flavius Josephus, a high-priest who commanded his flock of men into battle in *The Wars of the Jews*. Conversely, in his *Mediations* we find Marcus Aurelius introducing into the knowledge of ruling the notion of the emperor as a supreme being, a captain or shepherd that man, being an ‘element’ of this *logos*, must follow. Not coincidentally, Aurelius is often referred to in the literature by the epithet of philosopher king.

Whether or not the Christian pastoral model found its way into the West by the influence of the Egyptians, the Assyrians, or the Hebrews, pace Foucault, or simply must be understood as a kind of reworking of the theme of the herd in the Greeks, is not important then. What matters is the fact that the pastoral and the military models are congenial. Perhaps we could even say that they are indeed the Same, a set of antilogies, a conjunction of opposites which was once seen as truth [*alētheia*]. Perhaps this is in fact what accounts for the seemingly contradictory logic that would emerge in biopolitics of which it has been argued with perfect lucidity we see a power that ‘kills to make life live’ (Dillon & Reid 2009; Reid 2009). But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Such abstractions are but mere conjectures. However, these abstractions should now become more readily apparent in their concrete arrangements: Once Plato’s horde of struggling men utterly satiated by the desire for war and Aristotle’s nemesis of the particularly troublesome species animal whose desire is dominated by war, once these warmongering men with their pugnacious wills and desires have been lined up next to the gargoyles, the chimeras, the winged beasts of prey, and

all the other diabolical offspring, this is when the peaceful flock of sheep turns up in the fold as the *amassa damnata* [condemned crowd]. Having retreated to the point of the origin, the site of the fleeting articulation of God and the pure activity of mind, at once devoid and at the same time bristling with desire, the Fathers of the Church now read the *arkhē* scripture as proof of man's Original sin. At the site of an absolute distance from *phusis*, *theōria* once again finds its privileged beginning with desire, but this desire, now fully adequate to its own nature, cannot but find its end in the last judgement where the Word [logos] of God absolves the being of man or condemns it. The transgression of desire is therefore no longer something that must be considered in its actual, concrete manifestation, as in the event of man's desire being dominated by war, but an act whose occurrence simply reaffirms the form of the condemned crowd. The flock must now answer to the Fall of man. This is certainly a relationship that no Greek would see fit for himself, but we should not forget that the intrinsic logic of the shepherd-flock relationship, and the *theōria* that supported it, is already clearly delineated in the Greeks. Moreover, we should not fail to notice that it is basically the same topological figure that guides Plato in his idea that political community cannot come into being without the suspension of the war of every man against every man. The *amassa damnata* comes into being from the suspension of the same war, which stems from the 'war against ourselves within each one of us', the war that Aristotle would relegate to the site of the wholly unnatural at safe distance to his *politikon zōon*. Naming this 'private war' desire [libido] and placing it at the centre of its calculations, pastoral power does nothing other than rearticulate the bond between the mind and the *stratia*, thereby reinstating the tragedy once inflicted upon man's friendship with war. This resemblance is expressed most vividly in a passage of Augustine's *On Free Choice of the Will*. Although certainly an unfortunate matter of duty, we learn that a good Christian can nonetheless wage war so long as he observes the codes of the abstinent mind and fights without 'inordinate *libido*'.¹⁰⁴

So, we can see that the points of intersection of the two models in fact seem to constitute a common centre or point of articulation from where the care

¹⁰⁴ Augustine explains: "A soldier who kills the enemy is acting as an agent of the law, so he can easily perform his duty without inordinate desire [libido]." (I.5).

for the subsistence of life of pastoral power is exercised on life simply as the reverse of one and the same dream about freedom and salvation wherein the moderate man follows his ruler into battle. At the topological level, then, it should seem evident how the rebirth of *theōria* and the shepherd-flock relationship come to constitute a power that, pace Foucault, will have the 'greatest and most durable fortune' in Western politics. On the one hand, we can see how the military model was succeeded in the Roman *legio*. This is apparent in the treatises on the *militari*, such as Vegetius famous work *Concerning Military Matters*, a work that functioned as a military manual long into the Renaissance, and which Petrino Belli and Machiavelli had before them when they wrote their critiques on the art of war.¹⁰⁵

On the other hand, however, it seems necessary to inquire further into how the pastoral model comes to function in the domain of actual practices. Remember that when we encounter the shepherd-flock relationship as a model of politics in Plato, it appears as a completely anaemic or sterile power, a power that cannot really function both because of the limit posed by knowledge, but also because it seems defeated in the outset by the multiplicity of things and beings it must care for. Moreover, when we looked to Aristotle we saw how the science of politics, despite the presence of the *arkhē* scripture of *theōria*, was articulated around a relatively weak essence-knowledge relation, which could not really constitute a power that would not always be challenged by the necessity of *technē*, as well as the resistance articulated by the old resemblances of power as *kratos* and *bia*. The birth of pastoral power, however, would contribute to solving this problem that we, for the sake of convenience, could call the problem of the real. While it is no coincidence that pastoral power emerges at the level of the incorporeal, the care for the soul and its afterlife, one should not thereby overlook the morphological potentialities of this form of power that in fact will find its point of articulation in the Greek idea of ruling [arkhein]. In fact, we must now try to recognise these potentialities, in particular, in view of the Greek account of the *arkhē* and the displacement of the

¹⁰⁵ It should be noted, however, that the Romans did rework the tactics of the Greek phalanx and further developed the military-disciplinary practices, as explained by Gibbon in his extensive review of Roman sources (2000: 17-24).

Logos. We will see the mediation on the *Logos*, once articulated by Heraclitus, carried onto new battlefields where it, eventually, will find its common place of residence with Aristotle's *logos*, now transcribed as the Word of God. In any case, the problem one encounters in the pastoral model is the difficulty of how to give life to the *arkhē* scripture and make this knowledge function at the intersection of the incorporeal and the corporeal so as to enable a power capable of constituting the divine economy of the cities of men. This seems to have been a particularly difficult task since, as we know, the emissary and the messenger, who is supposed to transmit the commandments and orders of God, suffered and died. The possibility of God's rule in the mundane sphere of the *civitas* would therefore seem limited. In fact, not simply would it appear to be limited by the mere physical absence of the Son, but also by the problem that Father and Son for a long time actually were seen as one and the same. Since Father and Son are identical, Noetus explains, the Father suffered and died in the person of the Son. God's active creation in the temporal world is therefore impossible. This is how we find Noetus arguing that the fourth Gospel of John, in which Jesus performs a miracle, is to be considered an allegory rather than the sign of God, active in creation. The miracle of Jesus cannot be but an allegory, Noetus says, because if it were the expression of the incarnation of God's active creation this would presuppose the paradoxical logic of the simultaneous division and reconciliation in God of the corporeal and the incorporeal, being and action.

In the *Refutation of all Heresies*, Hippolytus deals with this heresy of the Noetians stating that they were influenced by the tenets of Heraclitus, whom Hippolytus refers to as the 'Dark' or the 'Obscure'. In fact, Hippolytus dedicates several passages of his book to demonstrating how the Noetian system of thought was essentially Heraclitean. In fact, in order to denounce the teachings of Noetus who at the time had a large following in Rome, Hippolytus goes to particularly painstaking efforts to explain the erroneous belief of Heraclitus that the *Logos* and God are identical. If God is one, Hippolytus argues, then the Trinity could only be achieved by way of some illusory shifting of forms between the corporeal and the incorporeal, substance and actuality. What is at stake in Hippolytus is in other words the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which

seems to have played a critical role in making the *arkhē* scripture function as the knowledge that defines the divine art of governing men. Specifically, Hippolytus draws on the first chapter of the Gospel of John in which Jesus is singled out as the incarnation of the divine *logos*. Here, it appears that God and the *logos* do not signify two forms of being that are identical. The *logos* is God – embodied in Jesus – active in creation or, more exactly, God’s self-revelation and redemption, the *logos*, appear as Jesus. So, even if the Son of God died, he lives on in the Word [logos] of God, who, at the same time, retains the potentiality of action by virtue of being non-identical to his messenger. But how then would the Trinity of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit be held together as God when they are not the same? We find the answer in Plotinus who would contribute to the elaboration of this model in a very important aspect. In Plotinus, who cites Heraclitus’ fragments, we find the idea that the *logos* is the principle of meditation that enables the interrelationship of three *hypostases* [existences or ‘being at rest’]. However, in the outset these *hypostases* do not concern the Christian Trinity, but rather what Plotinus calls the one, the mind, and the soul with reference to Plato’s form of the good, the *nous*, and the *psukhē*.

Plotinus influence in the Church Fathers, in particular, in Augustine is however immediately apparent. The idea of the divine as three *hypostasis* mediated by the *logos* is the epitome of the orthodox Christian doctrine in which the Trinity occurs as three *hypostases* in one essence [ousia]. God’s existence, as one *ousia*, is then reconciled with the possibility of his active creation. But how will God’s ruling find its point of articulation in the cities of men to constitute the divine providential governance of the world? In his minor treatise *Against Praxeas*, a heretic who like Noetus had claimed that the Father had suffered and died with the Son, we find Tertullian arguing that God must indeed be seen as a Trinity. In a passage of this text, however, we also find the peculiar formulation that the Trinity is what safeguards a certain mystery of the *oikonomia* of God, God’s household: “And at the same time the mystery of the economy [oikonomia] is safeguarded, for the unity is distributed in a Trinity. Placed in order, the three are the Father, Son, and Spirit.” (Against Praxeas II). In his treatise *Against Noetus*, Hippolytus, perhaps in allusion to Tertullian, makes a similar connection between the Trinity and God’s *oikonomia*: “The Father’s

Word [logos], therefore, knowing the economy [oikonomia] and the will of the Father... gave this charge to the disciples after he rose from the dead: 'Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'" (Against Noetus XIV).

By a series of displacements, then, Christian thought has now arrived at the place where no Greek could go; the site where the shepherd-flock relationship can be applied as a general model for the art of governing men. This sense of *oikonomia* would clearly have seemed strangely alien to the Greeks. At the same time, one should not forget that this is merely yet a displacement along the same axis of truth on which the *Logos* once became divided from *polemos*. The *logos* that now speaks the Word of God is the same *logos* that, once detached from the unceasing motion of *kosmos*, came to appear at that middle ground where man once assumed the task of steering *polemos* – the metaphysical exercise par excellence. It is the return of this *logos* that appeared with the fracture by which the *logos* became both the mean, which occurred at the intersection of mind and desire, and the account of the essential nature of things. It is the return of the fracture that then occurred in the soul, and which Aristotle sought to avoid by projecting it onto the origin and the plane of God, an *ousia* permanently at rest, but capable of originating movement. We are in other words close to Plotinus use of the term *hypostasis*, but, in Aristotle, *hypostasis* does not seem to occur at the level of God. It is rather employed in the sense of *phronēsis* that deals with a particular thing that is immediately apparent, such as a particular specimen of a species animal.

That is, we are closer to the reality in which the *logos* must answer to *phusis*. However, having been transcribed as the divine Word of God, it is this *logos* that now returns to constitute yet a caesura that would only be resolved at the site of the Trinity. One should therefore not be surprised to see *Theos* appear before man again and, from that strange middle region where the clearing is out of sight, disclose the truth, essence, and form that constitute the particularly pugnacious kind of thinking which in time would be known as reason. Continuing this line of thought, it is clear that this reason, of which Kant would say 'there can be really no polemic', would be reawakened at the site where juridico-philosophical thought discovers the solution to the problem of

order, the subject who cannot occur but from the suspension of the state of nature and the sanitation of man's relationship with war. As the necessary counterpart to this reasonable subject, we now find the perfectly reasonable state [stato], permanently at rest and fully adequate to its own nature. Foucault has accurately captured this profound moment in Western political history when, from the end of the sixteenth century, reason would enter into alignment with the idea of ruling a certain domain permanently at rest, a *stato*, to constitute the art of government known as *ragione di stato* or *raison d'État*. Now, what is understood by reason in this discourse on the art of governing the state? Foucault's references to Palazzo, Bacon, and Chemnitz are particularly instructive:

'Reason', [Palazzo] says... is the entire essence of a thing, which constitutes the union, the combination of all its parts; it is the necessary bond between the different elements that constitute a thing... But 'reason' is also employed in another sense. Subjectively, reason is a certain power of the soul that enables it to know the truth of things, that is to say, precisely that bond, that integrity of the different parts that constitutes a thing. (Foucault 2007: 256).

What surfaces in this discourse on the reason of state is, of course, the *logos*. The Greek *logos* does not come up in the text, and Foucault naturally does not refer to it all the while that this is not the subject at stake. In parenthesis, though, we should note that reason is derived from the Latin root, *ratio*, which is the transliteration of *logos*. As we know, six- and seventeenth century writers, such as Hobbes, Locke, Bacon, Palazzo, and Chemnitz, commonly wrote in Latin. By recourse to Greek and Latin texts, they often employ the words *logos*, *ratio*, *reason*, and *raison* interchangeably. So, in these writers, although they deploy the term in a vastly different context, we never leave that middle ground of the Classical Greek *logos* where the power of the soul is in perfect alignment with the essence of the thing. Moreover, equally striking is the definition we find of the word 'state' [stato]:

'State', says Palazzo, is a word understood in four senses. A state is a domain, *dominium*. Second, he says, it is a jurisdiction, a set of laws, rules, and customs... Third... 'state' is a condition of life, that is to say, a kind of individual status, or a

profession: the state magistrate, or the state of celibacy, or the religious state. And finally, fourth, the 'state', he says, is something that renders things, if not completely immobile – and here I skip the detail, because, he says, some forms of immobility would be contrary to the thing's rest, and some things must move so as to be able to remain really at rest – in any case this state is a quality that means that the thing remains what it is. (Ibid.).

But what, then, defines the conjunction of 'reason' and 'state'? It is 'a rule or an art', says Palazzo, "... which makes known to us the means for obtaining the integrity, tranquillity, or peace of the republic." It is an art that "... must strive solely for the preservation; the expansion, and felicity of the state, and for which it must employ the most ready and swift means." (Ibid. 257). As Foucault notes, it is remarkable how this art of government refers to nothing but the state itself. There are no gods to be answered to, no reference to nature, to cosmos or any other order than that, which is the essence of state. There is no reference to the happiness of men or life according to the good as end of political community. It has no end foreign to the state itself. The reason of state is that without which "[the] republic itself... would not be able or sufficient to maintain itself in peace for one hour." (Ibid. 259). As we know, this is precisely the sense of reason Hobbes had in mind when he made the order of political community contingent upon the principle of sovereignty. By then we are obviously far from the Greek experience of ruling, but it seems to me that this is in fact where we can see one of the most significant influences of the Greeks on the political ethos of Western culture. While the Christian heritage is evident in this reason of state, the state as the secular form of the divine *oikonomia* articulated by the commandment of the Word of God [logos] and the being of God as one *ousia* of *hypostasis*, the reason that Hobbes and the thinkers of the state of nature without further difficulty could transcribe the divine art of ruling into its political form, the mortal divinity Leviathan, has its ground at the much earlier period in time where the idea of political authority was worked out by recourse to the originarity of the soul, that is, the soul that once stepped into appearance with the ruling principle to take charge of war and discover its freedom and salvation in the recurrent practice of conquest. In essence, I think that perhaps one of the defining moments in Western political thought occurred in the period we might

now have lost sight of, the period in which the friendship with war was once replaced by the practice of steering war. This event was not the Fall of man, but rather the beginning of a tragedy without end in which the military model of war would continue to be reinvested in the order of things from the middle ground of the *logos*. As thought walks from the halls of the Parthenon with its artful metopes of *kosmos* and *agōnia*, expressing the old kinship of man and *polemos*, to the realm of the well-ordered soul the philosophers begin to dream of, and which Kant was still dreaming of some twenty-two centuries later, the old kinship of man and war will be erased like a face drawn at the edge of the sea.

§ 6 Threshold of Modernity – The *Logos* of *Polemos* [War]

6.1. This thesis found its starting point in the wonderment of the fragments of an ancient knowledge of war, a knowledge that articulated a site, seemingly without law or geometry, time and space, a site on which war appeared where man was supposed to turn up. But from this vantage point of war that seemed to mark the site of the heterotopia, where words could not name their proper subject or object and things seemed to repel their true identities, I came to question whether in fact the order of war could really be understood in terms of the concept that was said to define it; the concept that claimed war to be a matter of the sovereign decision; that war was something one could decide upon and shape from objectives derived from strategic and tactic interventions; that war had in fact always been understood as an art of ruling one could master in which practice the mind would rise above men and gods, the slaves and the free, and, in the splendour of its perfect plenitude, announce the beginning and the end. Utopias afford consolation, as Foucault says in the preface to *The Order Of Things*, while reminding us that order is both ‘that which is given in things as their inner law’ and ‘that which has no existence except in the grid created by a glance, an examination, a language’ (2008: xxi).

Utopias open up the untroubled region where the mind must not answer to the war it has taken possession of, and where the grammar of war and the war that is given in things have no need for a common place of residence. The Greek experience of *polemos* seems to have provided us with some of the first coordinates for the strange odyssey of war where, today, the mind, believing it has the truth, has withdrawn war to the unattainable place of this untroubled region. But this is certainly not the setting in which we find the order of war on the terrain of ancient Greece. In fact, one would indeed have a hard time finding among the Greeks anything resembling our contemporary concept of war. *Polemos* did not conform to the idea of a conflict resulting in substantial loss of

human life or to a matter of the command of the general staff. When Plato mentions three kinds of war in the *Laws*, that of man's war against himself, the war of every man against every man and, finally, the war against an external enemy, and when Aristotle distinguishes the warrior of ancient mythologeme from his *politikon zōon* in the *Politics*, what either philosopher had in mind was not the kind of war that cannot but find its end in the finitude of killing the Other. The Greek world certainly remains far removed from the rift that would be inflicted upon war at the threshold of liberal modernity where biopolitical regimes would afford themselves the utopia of Kantian cosmopolitanism and perpetual peace.

In fact, in its classical Greek setting, cosmopolitanism is neither the expression of a political philosophy nor the vision formulated by great statesmen or prophets. The subject who speaks this discourse is rather their true strategic opposite. The first entry of the word in the literature in fact seems to appear with Diogenes of Sinope, a contemporary of Plato and partner in polemic. Legend has it that when asked where he came from, Diogenes answered: "I am a citizen of the world [*kosmopolitēs*]" (Diogenes Laertius VI: 63). While seemingly the expression of the sweet dream of the philosopher, in Diogenes, the word *kosmopolitēs* has a distinctly different meaning. Whereas Aristotle can certainly speak of the resemblance of the *politēs* [citizen], the *polis*, and *Theos* [God], this is by no means what Diogenes has in mind. Diogenes' answer is the response of the Cynic who would never pass up on the opportunity to satirise and mock the Athenian citizen for his self-conceived greatness and grand illusions. In fact, to use the word *politēs* about Diogenes would already be a mistake. A man of no possessions who took up residence in a tub, Diogenes could not claim the status of *politēs* in the sense of the political stature bestowed upon the Athenian citizen through wealth and breeding.¹⁰⁶

Yet, this merely scratches the surface of the satirical gesture of Diogenes. Diogenes' reply only makes sense when taken together with a second statement: "The only true political order [*politeia*] I find is in the cosmos [*kosmos*]."

¹⁰⁶ As a Cynic, Diogenes was in fact closer to the 'heartless man' Aristotle mentions in a passage of the *Politics*, the man who has no political existence and who is therefore without a *polis* [apolis] (1253a: 1-6).

(Diogenes Laertius VI: 72). In Diogenes, the word *kosmopolitēs* is in other words the conjunction of two essentially antithetical realities, *politēs* and *kosmos*. The irony Diogenes seemingly turns against himself is in other words a masquerade, a masquerade which, when the masks come off, will reveal the Cynic who, with cruel subtlety and biting wit, deploys truth [alētheia] as a weapon against the practices and virtues that rule the citizen in the classical *polis*. For what would seem to express mere satire in fact contains the disturbing truth that the kind of *politeia* that had materialised in the classical world, and whose perfection Socrates would dream about in the *Republic*, was born out of a displacement; a dislocation of the chain of resemblances which, throughout the archaic period and long into the classical world, guided man and his actions. During the classical period, man will no longer so much be guided by *polemos* that steers the *kosmos*. Man and war change places in the order of things as man discovers the idea of ruling and steering war in the principle of command [arkhein]. In contrasting the *Logos* that steers the *kosmos* with the *arkhē* that rules the *politēs*, Diogenes may well have given the most beautiful formulation of the caesura that once appeared at the vast divide in Western history where man began to assert himself over war.

But political man, with his philosophy, his *thēoria*, and his desire, was really just a symptom. He was the symptom of the birth of a profound concern about the self, a concern that appeared because this was the form knowledge assumed with the displacement in the order of war, wherein man and war came to change places. But we must not let ourselves get caught-up in nostalgia over the disappearance of man's friendship with war. After all, did the terrible not appear precisely in the splendour of life most intense, most vigorous, and most divine? In other words, we cannot put our faith in that certain will to return man to the domain of the real and the site of the original. As Foucault says in a passage at the end of *The Order of Things*:

[This is] the experience of Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, in which the return is posited only in the extreme recession of the origin – “in that region where the gods have turned away, where the desert is increasing, where the *technē* has established the dominion of its will... (Foucault 2008: 364).

If we dismiss for a moment the predicament that the 'dominion of the *technē*' is in fact intimately related with the problem of the one God who is man himself, we cannot however simply ignore this experience since it is precisely at this point of the extreme recession of the origin, or rather, in the thought that overturns the origin and displaces it upon the vicissitudes of history, it becomes possible to pose the question of how and to what extent it may be possible to think differently. It seems to me then that, perhaps, one must in fact welcome the return to the desert of the real, since it is precisely at this site of *polemos*, where things are nearest to man and yet furthest from him, that he might decentre himself from *logos* and let the mind be carried off along with words and things, men and gods, the slaves and the free. In fact, we would then have left behind any ambition to recover what is merely the lure of the intoxicating vapours of being that occurs in the void of the origin. We would be left with the infinite task, not of knowing what *polemos* is, but of rethinking the present at the site of *polemos*. In short, we would be at the site of the permanent displacement of the anteriority of war.

6.2. One thing in any case is certain. It is the absence of a power over life that comes to light in the uneasiness one might initially feel when reading the fragment of Heraclitus. This sense of uneasiness is in other words not simply the effect of the nonattendance of the concept of war, but probably bound up with the whole Western organisation of knowledge, in which, as Foucault said, 'knowledge and truth cannot *not* belong to the register of order and peace' or 'be found on the side of violence, disorder, and war'. It is bound up with this entire economy war that ties together the subject, who has his soul, his reason, his mind, and his desires, with the principle of state and the military model of war. Of these *hypostasis* mediated by the *logos*, to borrow a topological analogy from the theologians, the modern state has perhaps been the site on which man has faced the most of the so-called enigmas, such as the Napoleonic Wars, the First World War, and the Second World War. Of these events, the one that saw the rise of the principle of *Führung* may have appeared as perhaps the most disquieting. But this *Führer* with his flock simply declared his faithfulness to the very principle of state and the sense of reason that belongs to this art of government. Moreover, if this reason of state universalised war, it is equally

clear that it is the same war that appeared in Kant's utopia of perpetual peace. It should therefore come as no surprise that when, in the aftermath of the First World War, a new discourse awoke to overturn the Kantian utopia, it would not be by recourse to the suspension of the war of every man against every man. On the contrary, the critique would situate itself precisely on the basis of the universalisation of the state of nature as the principle that defines the very order of states. The external constraint Kant sought out at the level of cosmopolitical being is then no longer needed. In fact, no external reference is needed. No gods will have to be answered to, nor will this order require any reference to nature or cosmos. Beginning with E. H. Carr, the constraint that Kant located at the site of utopia will be revealed as internal to the order of states. It will then be possible to recognise order and peace without considering anything apart from the state of war among states that constitutes the essence of the relations of states. Peace is therefore to be seen in war itself. The order of war, which at least since the Greeks had been established with reference to an external constraint of some kind or another, reappears at the site of the origin where the essence of war reads as the cipher of peace given by the balance of power. The discipline of international relations is born.

It is certainly no coincidence that the enigma which faces this discipline from its inception, and the nemesis that would come to haunt it at the beginning of this century, is that the subject who wages war is no longer to be found at the site of war. Man as a living being has disappeared from the site of war where he for millennia had come to do battle with the Other. Today's drone war, which soon found an inexhaustible source of renewal in the rift inflicted by terrorism on the ordered surfaces of war, is the disturbing sign of this development in which the reality of war now appears in the void left by man's disappearance. It is clear that the invention of the state would make man disappear from war, but it is equally obvious that man's absence would coincide with the discovery of the terrorist. This is in fact where the odyssey of war, at least for now, will exhaust itself – in the return of the origin, the *logos*, and that middle ground from where the concept of war provides the cipher of terrorism. From this middle ground, where reason again takes hold of one side of *polemos*, and

believes it has the truth, terrorism will be recognised as the absence of reason; as fanaticism, fundamentalism, and risk of violent death.

Is it then a new cruelty of peace or merely part of the same political dream that, despite all the contradictions and apparent setbacks in history, the idea of removing life from the condition of war continues to compel even the most prominent thinkers to reinvest their faith in the peace to come?¹⁰⁷ One thing is certain in any case. It is no doubt due to the calamities of this peace that the void, which has opened up amid the Western experience of war, always seems to disappear from view in the splendour of commandment. It bares the markings of the terrible, which becomes all the more evident when one realises that, even in the fiercest and most viciously crude of discourses on war,¹⁰⁸ and even if these authors seemingly state the opposite views of Kant, one always seems to find that elusive peace lurking in the shadow as the secret call to politics. If today's warfare reminds us of this profound void that has appeared between war and life, the erudition that has now begun to read the history of war and the cosmos alike as parts of an *arkhē* scripture of politics seems to affirm it. The peaceful man who turned up just before the new millennium to announce the end of history on behalf of mankind would originate with a grimace over its future development.¹⁰⁹ Cosmopolitical man had been resuscitated, but only to be plagued by the ferocious man of war he had long ago consigned to the state of nature. Man would once again call upon himself to perform the ancient ritual of exorcising his profound violences. He would throw down the dangerous man and smite his ruin upon the infinite dispersion of the ocean. But since it is he who has killed the dangerous man, it is peaceful man himself who must now answer for the atrocities of war. We still want to evoke the splendours of peace by showing man's atrociousness in the state of nature, but this path is now forbidden, since man has disappeared from the site of war and went in the abeyance of the Word of commandment lived as the elementary and

¹⁰⁷ Writing in the immediate aftermath of September 11th, Habermas cautiously proposes that perhaps September 11th will once be considered a 'historical sign' pointing to a 'moral tendency of humankind', as Kant once spoke of shortly after the French Revolution; a historical sign signifying the transition from classical international law to cosmopolitan order (Habermas & Derrida 2003: 27).

¹⁰⁸ E.g. Kagan 2002; Elshtain 2003; Walzer 2006.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. Fukuyama 1992.

indecomposable unity of the signified. Yet, since it is in the death of the man of war that peaceful man speaks, thinks, and exists, his murder is itself doomed to die; new terrors, the same terrors, are already swelling in the future ocean.

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Index of Names

In this index, an 'f' after a number indicates a separate reference on the next page. A continuous discussion over two or more pages is indicated by a span of page numbers, e.g., '55-57'. *Passim* is used for a cluster of references in close but not consecutive sequence.

- Achilles, 18-20, 72, 75, 81-83, 87-88, 98-99, 135-136
passim, 221-227 passim, 229, 234
- Agamben, Giorgio, 63-64, 71, 128-131 passim, 139, 141-143
passim, 162, 170-171, 173, 181, 198-199, 203-204, 206
- Agamemnon, 18-19, 81-83, 87-88, 98, 104, 134-135, 210
- Ajax, 55, 81, 87-89, 98
- Anaxagoras, 155, 163
- Anaximander, 166
- Anaximenes, 148, 166
- Arès, 7, 72-74, 78-79, 84, 95, 104, 108, 112, 115-116, 150, 163, 196
- Aristotle, 7-8, 13-15 passim, 29, 52, 55, 57, 63-64, 67-68, 86, 91, 96, 123, 127-143 passim, 147, 149, 151, 152, 154-160 passim, 162-171 passim, 176, 179-181, 183-199 passim, 201, 213-218
- Antigone, 55, 92-104 passim, 129, 133
- Aristodemus, 112, 114, 118, 197
- Augustine, 225, 228
- Aurelius, Marcus, 62, 224
- Bartelson, Jens, 52, 141
- Belli, Pietrino, 226
- Briseis, 81, 83
- Callicles, 204, 207
- Clausewitz, Carl von, 33, 35, 59, 64, 68, 70
- Creon, 92-94 passim, 96-102 passim
- Deleuze, Gilles, 83, 87-88
- Democritus, 147, 155
- Derrida, Jacques, 146
- Descartes, René, 40
- Dillon, Michael, 28, 29, 50, 224
- Diogenes, 15, 154, 234-235
- Diogenes Laertus, 154

- Diomedes, 136-138 *passim*, 143, 183
- Dionysus, 75, 137
- DuBois, Page, 91
- Einstein, Albert, 150
- Empedocles, 157
- Esposito, Robert, 179
- Euripides, 89
- Foucault, Michel, 10-17 *passim*, 25-28 *passim*, 32-37 *passim*, 39, 42-51 *passim*, 53-54, 58-71 *passim*, 77, 129, 132, 143, 170, 172-175 *passim*, 187, 210-215 *passim*, 224, 226, 230, 231, 233, 235-236
- Glaucus, 73, 112
- Guattari, Félix, 84, 88
- Guthrie, W.K.C., 22
- Hector, 73, 82-83, 112
- Heidegger, Martin, 21, 33, 76-77, 80, 100, 102, 104, 159, 190, 200, 236
- Helen, 81, 82
- Hephaestus, 186
- Heraclitus, 21, 56, 77-78, 109, 145-147 *passim*, 150, 152-153, 158, 228-229, 237
- Hercules, 88, 206
- Herodotus, 107, 113, 119, 198
- Hesiod, 131, 156-157, 173, 214-215
- Hippolytus, 228-229
- Hobbes, Thomas, 8, 11-12, 32-34, 39-42, 60-61, 70, 180, 188, 192, 207-208, 231-232
- Homer, 7-8, 14, 19-21 *passim*, 55-56, 75-77 *passim*, 80, 102, 105, 108-110 *passim*, 112, 114, 119, 132, 135-138 *passim*, 164, 184, 186, 200, 211, 220
- Isocrates, 185, 213-214
- Josephus, Flavius, 225
- Kant, Immanuel, 26, 34, 42, 44, 46, 94-95, 189, 230, 232, 235, 238-239
- Lacan, Jacques, 75, 94-95, 130
- Laclau, Ernesto, 142
- Machiavelli, Niccolò, 60, 227
- Nestor, 136-139 *passim*
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 37-38, 89, 119, 173, 236
- Noetus, 228-230
- Odysseus, 88-89, 164
- Oracle of Delphi, 74, 147
- Palazzo, Giovanni Antonio, 231-232
- Paris, 81-82, 154
- Patroclus, 73, 82
- Pericles, 123-124
- Pindar, 131, 146, 203-207
- Plato, 6, 8, 9, 14-15, 18, 33, 57, 68, 77, 83, 87, 92, 94, 105, 109, 111-119 *passim*, 123-125 *passim*, 128, 134-136, 148, 154-155, 159, 164, 168, 175,

188, 192, 195-209 <i>passim</i> ,	Tertullian, 229
211-229 <i>passim</i> , 235	Thales, 167
Plotinus, 229-230	Theseus, 91, 93
Polemarchus, 118-119, 197, 213	Thrasymachus, 212-213
Polynices, 93-94, 96, 98, 100-102	Thucydides, 56, 107.111 <i>passim</i> , 123,
Praxeas, 229	125-128 <i>passim</i> , 142, 194, 198
Reid, Julian, 29, 225	Vegetius, Publius Flavius, 34, 227
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 41, 147, 180	Xenophon, 15, 18, 119-123 <i>passim</i> ,
Sextus Empiricus, 149	176, 189, 196, 214
Sloterdijk, Peter, 20, 79	Zeus, 7, 73, 96, 98-99, 102, 112, 122,
Snell, Bruno, 20-21, 77	150, 164, 183, 185, 211-215
Sophocles, 56, 89-90, 98-99, 110	<i>passim</i>

